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O'Donnell

THE MENACE OF SPIRITUALISM

THE MENACE OF SPIRITUALISM

BY

ELLIOT O'DONNELL

Author of "Ghostly Phenomena," "The Haunted Man," "Twenty Years' Experience as a Ghost Hunter," etc.

WITH A FOREWORD BY
FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

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DEDICATED

BY PERMISSION TO

HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

NOTE

In presenting this volume to the public I desire it to be perfectly clear that the views in it apply to Spiritualism only (not to Psychical Research, which, inasmuch as it touches on the investigation of spontaneous manifestations in haunted houses, etc., is, in my opinion, justifiable), and do not detract in any way from the attitude I have hitherto adopted in my writings towards spontaneous ghostly phenomena.

ELLIOT O'DONNELL.

FOREWORD

ALTHOUGH I do not subscribe to all the doctrine and teachings expressed between the covers of this brochure, yet do I gladly recommend it to the public as an exposition of the menace of Spiritualism in our midst. The public has plenty of temptations to encounter on the road of life without its being enticed and drawn into these sideshows where freaks, frauds, and fiends may rob them not only of their money, but, perhaps, even leave them stripped of their physical outfit and of their moral attributes.

Naturally I do not place all under the same damnation because I can but judge of the ruin wrought through Spiritualism by the cases that have come under my own observation. But you may depend upon it that the Catholic Church would not forbid her children to have anything at all to do with this insidious form of necromancy unless she was satisfied that harm only and no good comes out of it. Her experience of Spirit-

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infidelity. If the spirits, who speak through mediums, live, on the other side, the lives they describe, then the other side ought to be the soul's probation for this—not this for that.

My advice to all readers of this spirited exposure of Spiritualism is to shun it as they would cocaine. In neither drug is to be discovered the Will of God, which is man's end in life, but in both may be found ruin of body and loss of soul. This very morning I heard of a girl, who, being told in a séance by her deceased lover that he would not live on the other side without her, drowned herself to join him, not, I fancy, in heaven—"Notum fac mihi, Domine, finem meum."

BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

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THE MENACE OF SPIRITUALISM

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CHAPTER I

"SPIRITUALISM"—WHAT IS IT?

SPIRITUALISM! What does it all mean? Can it do us any good? Has it really come to stay?

These are the questions the ordinary man and woman, and the British public in general, are now beginning to ask in downright earnest. For a long time what is known as Spiritualism flourished in comparative obscurity. Apart from its own particular adherents, and those who, existent in every age, make a point of inquiring into all kinds of cults and philosophies, there were few who took even the remotest interest in it. The vast majority, perhaps, had never even heard of it; and to the bulk, at least, of the middle classes, like Psychical Research, it was either a mere

term, or it was classified in the same category as ghosts and hobgoblins, and meant nothing to them. Then came the Great War, and once again the air filled with the cries and lamentations of the bereaved; the cries of mothers mourning for their sons, the cries of wives sorrowing for their husbands. It was merely a repetition of the same old story, slaughter and desolation, and, in the words of the prophet, "Rachel weeping for her children, because they were not"; but it was a repetition which has proved that the world, despite its boastful pretensions to an enlightened Christianity and civilization, has not advanced very far along the path of gentleness and toleration; has not, as yet, set its foot upon the one and only path of real progress. And, as in all times of excessive sorrow and bereavement, so now, "Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted," those who were hit hard and felt acutely the pangs of the empty chair and missing form at the family table, turned to channels other than mere human agency for consolation. Some, indeed, there were who, not entirely ruled and regulated by the rush, and tear, and helter-skelter of passing events,

found what they sought in prayer, in the quiet old-time faith that had sufficed their forefathers; but the remainder, those whose minds responded to the twentieth century's predominating cry for constantly increasing speed, and whose thoughts were tuned to keep pace with telephones and wireless, demanded instant demonstration. All the Church could do was to tell them to wait, to wait and hope, that Christ's promise was one of revelation; but of a revelation they must not precipitate, must not expect till the hour of their own dissolution was at hand. But neither waiting nor watching appeals to the pioneers and supporters of twentieth-century hurry and dispatch. Life may be long; to the young an eternity, and no one can be expected to wait that length of time for an assurance on a question that concerns him intimately. Is there another life or not? There must be no dallying, no equivocating. Something quick and decisive is asked for; something quick and decisive must be given. Proof—positive, immediate, unequivocal proof.

That was the cry of this section of the distressed, a section in the main composed of

the upper and middle classes; those who are known as the quite common people shouldered their burdens more stoically. The toiling poor are accustomed to dallying—waiting and hoping form part of their daily curriculum. However, the cry found response. Just as the wailing of the infant or the neighing of the horse on the steppes so often summons wolves, and the lowing of the oxen in the jungle apparently calls into being jackals and tigers, so the frantic demands of these unhappy parents and widows conjured up those styling themselves mediums—spiritualists who, for fees (in most cases considerable ones), declared their ability to provide instantaneous and definite proofs of another life, by evoking and conversing with the spirits of the dead.

Their offers were hungrily accepted. Crowds flocked to their doors, and all the more readily and eagerly, since their methods were obviously in accordance with the views of such men as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir W. F. Barrett and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who through their writing chiefly, had given the cause of Spiritualism, as a whole, an immense impetus.

Soon, going to a medium, like consulting the oracles of old, became a fashion; it afforded novelty and excitement, and appealed especially to the upper and middle classes, because it was too costly a form of entertainment ever to be shared by their poorer brethren. Those who had not lost relatives in the war, as well as the bereaved, became bitten with the craze for Spiritualism; the papers took it up; the magazines encouraged it; and now, bidding fair to rival some of the periodical madnesses of old, it has swept, with an epidemic-like force throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain.

Yet it has apparently given satisfaction only to the few; the masses are still hopelessly in the cold, still hopelessly unconvinced, still hopelessly inquiring.

Spiritualism! What does it all mean? Can it do us any real good? Has it actually come to stay?

Now, it is not very easy to affix any specific creed to Spiritualism, since it throws open its doors to people of varying and divergent ideas and beliefs, and has no very distinct dogmas of its own. However, it professes absolute confidence in the ability of living

man to bring, at will, the spirit world within the close range of his senses, and to get into actual and immediate contact with it; and it is on this belief alone that the whole fabric of Spiritualism appears to be based. To substantiate this statement I need only quote at random from the definitions of Spiritualism by avowed disciples of the creed.

Dr. J. M. Peebles in his work "What is Spiritualism," published 1903, says (p. 5), "Spiritualism is the philosophy of life and the direct antithesis of materialization. Spiritualism does not create truth, but it is a living witness to the truth of a future existence. It reveals it; it demonstrates, describing its inhabitants, their occupations, etc."

Whilst Leon Denis in his book "Christianity and Spiritualism," translated from the French by Helen Draper Speakman (published by Rider & Sons), says on page 28: "We shall thus arrive at the conclusion that His (referring to Christ's) doctrine and that of the spirits are identical, that Spiritualism is simply the return to primitive Christianity under more definite form, and we shall do so with an imposing train of experimental proofs which will render impossible the re-

newed misrepresentation of the ideas of Christ."

These "experimental proofs" can, I venture to think, only refer to experiments with spirits, presumably those of the dead, and since reference to this same source of conviction will be found in most, if not, indeed, all the definitions of Spiritualism by Spiritualists, I can only again emphasize my statement that the real basis of Spiritualism, the stone on which the whole structure pivots, is a positive confidence in the ability of man, living, breathing man—man on and belonging to this material plane, to conjure up the denizens of the spiritual world, to see, to touch, to converse with them at will, and to keep them actively employed at his beck and call, preparing all kinds of phenomena for the gratification of his own peculiar whims and pleasures. Once prove this belief to be based on a no more substantial foundation than inflated fancy, hallucinations, delusions, gross exaggeration and barefaced trickery, and the whole edifice of Spiritualism would at once break in pieces and crumble away into mere nothingness. So far, however, in spite of the countless and more than partially successful

efforts that are continually being made to obtain this proof, something every now and then crops up to which skepticism and materialism can offer no very convincing explanation; and this something has invariably succeeded in not merely keeping Spiritualism from being snuffed out altogether, but occasionally—as is happening at the present moment—in imparting to it a life and a luster that arouses grave apprehensions in the minds of the more thoughtful and rational of us, and that would arouse even graver ones, did we not, deriving our inspirations from similar happenings in the past, believe such an outburst to be merely spasmodic.

But more of this anon. To revert to the definition of Spiritualism. I have endeavored to show that Spiritualism as a creed—if one may so designate it—relies mainly on one distinguishing principle, and that, apart from this single outstanding feature, it derives its coloring, chiefly, from the country in which it happens to be located. In India, for example, its teachings are a reflection of Theosophy and confused Paganism; whilst in England and America the tenets it advances largely take their color from a contorted and

perverted rendering of the Old and New Testaments. It is this infusion of so many diverse views and credulities into Spiritualism that has led some people to attribute to it a much larger individual doctrine and literature than that to which it is really entitled; and to regard it as having two distinct branches, namely the doctrinal and the phenomena, though the two are, in reality, so closely related to one another that any absolute separation is impossible. However, for the purpose of criticism, I think it is well to deal with these two so-called branches separately.

In the space allotted me I can do little more than merely allude to Spiritualism in its relation to Theosophy and other oriental schools of religious philosophy. I believe there is nothing in the teachings of Theosophy, which is about as heterogeneous a jumble of tenets and ideas as it is possible to conceive, i. e., a jumble of gnosticism, taken from three distinct schools, Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism, Roman, Greek and Egyptian mythology, and countless other mythologies—to contradict the main

principle of Spiritualism; on the contrary, as the majority of those professing Theosophy most certainly countenance, in a more or less restricted sense, and, under somewhat elastic conditions, practice Spiritualism, one may reasonably conclude that it is not only reconcilable with Theosophy, but that it may even be said to come within its tenets and, possibly, to have been in the beginning merely an offshoot from it. At the same time I believe I am right in saying that there is a certain phase of Spiritualism to which a large number of Theosophists object, a phase which is termed Spiritism, and which signifies the resorting of the Spiritual-phenomena side of Spiritualism for merely idle and speculative purposes.

Before passing on to the main subject of my criticism—Spiritualism in England—I should like to remark that it was rather unfortunate for the cause of Spiritualism and Theosophy alike, that one of the founders of the Modern School of Theosophy in the East, Helen Petrovna Blavatsky, better known as H. P. B., after laying claim to such an extraordinary development of the so-called psychic faculty that she was brought into

touch and, one might say, was on terms of actual intimacy with entities on the very highest spiritual planes (she is still regarded by the theosophical sages as an initiated disciple of the Mahatma, known as Morya, and included by them in the same category as Plato, Pythagoras, and other great moral expounders of the past), should eventually have been detected in an act or acts of common or garden fraud whilst producing some of her alleged spiritual phenomena. Had H. P. B. been a person of less exalted position her misdeeds might not have given rise to quite so much criticism; but being almost akin to a Mahatma her exposure not unnaturally led cynics to suggest that a cult founded by a person whose practices were far from being of a godlike nature, could be neither very sound nor very desirable. Besides, these cynics argued, the psychic properties to which the majority of her followers laid claim, since they obviously did not enable their owners to see beneath the surface, were of little practical use to them; and spirit guides, if they cannot warn us of danger and put us on our guard against people likely to abuse our confidence,

cannot be reckoned of any great worth or value.

Furthermore, the exposure of H. P. B. led outsiders to wonder whether the same influences, spiritual or otherwise, to which she was subject, might not, also, be inspiring some of her adherents; whether, indeed, in the ranks of the more prominent and arrogant members of the cults of Theosophy and Spiritualism—for both came under her wing—there might not be others equally daring, equally plausible and equally unscrupulous, who, taking advantage of the more ignorant, trustful and gullible members of the fraternities, were laughing up their sleeves and, at the same time, fattening. As, however, I am reserving my comments on Spiritualism in India for another occasion, I will pass on now to the doctrinal branch of Spiritualism in England.

CHAPTER II

HOW SPIRITUALISM TRIES TO DISTORT THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE center of Spiritualism, as is the case with the centers of most creeds and cults in this country, is in London, and the bulk of the Spiritualists in London profess an adulterated type of Christianity.

"Spiritualists, like the Primitive Churches," says Dr. J. M. Peebles, "believe in God the Father,"[1] and he goes on to say: "Spiritualism is of God," adding that "the corner stone, the foundation pillar of Spiritualism, is spirit, and God is Spirit."[2] He seems to forget, however, that there are various kinds of spirits, that all are not of necessity good, and that the spirit that has inspired Spiritualism may belong to a very

[1] "What is Spiritualism?" (p. 9). By J. M. Peebles, M.D., M.A. Published by Peebles Institute. Printed 1903.
[2] Same work, pp. 10–11.

different category from that which constitutes God.

Indeed, if one might form an opinion as to what constitutes the corner stone of Spiritualism, from the type of Spiritualists one meets at séances, one might affirm that if spirit at all, that spirit is astonishingly worldly, to a large extent commercial, distinctly grotesque and bizarre, and consequently not at all in accordance with anything the more thoughtful of us outside the ranks of Spiritualism would ascribe to the highest Spiritual Plane, least of all to a being of such infinite wisdom and virtue as God. However, to continue, one need not be surprised, perhaps, that the propounders of Spiritualism—since it owes, in no small measure, its existence to an atmosphere of mysticism the ages have built round it—should profess to see in the Scriptures mysteries and occult evidences far too profound to catch the eye of the more vulgar and less initiated materialist.

Mr. John Page Hopps, in a pamphlet entitled "Spiritualism in the Old Testament," goes so far as to describe the whole of the

Old Testament as "a sealed book," full of spirit appearances, spirit lights, spirit sounds, trance speaking and symbolism, at the same time he assures us that all such happenings are perfectly familiar to the modern Spiritualist. This same writer, like most Spiritualists, pitches upon the book of Ezekiel as being specially psychic, and subjects not only the prophet, but the Holy Spirit to whom the prophet attributes his powers, to a severe criticism. We are told, for example, that although Ezekiel was a medium, possessing the faculties both of clairvoyance and clairaudience, he was open to all kinds of spirit influences, good, bad and indifferent, and that it is simply foolish to consider all his inspirations as emanating from God. Mr. Hopps even suggests that it is very doubtful, according to the true (i. e., the psychic) interpretation of Ezekiel, if the Jehovah, who is alluded to as "the Lord," was, in reality, God Almighty; in fact he infers that the Jehovah of the Jews was merely a finite spirit—or band of spirits —of very varying power, who had taken the Hebrew race under his or their guardian-

ship and found them very much of a handful. In this latter respect, perhaps, some of us will agree with him.

Mr. Hopps, like most so-called authorities on Spiritualism and Psychism, is arrogant, and, as I shall endeavor to show later, highly fanciful and imaginative. That Ezekiel possessed very peculiar spiritual powers is, of course, clearly apparent; had he not possessed them he would not have been able to prophesy and predict; but it is equally apparent that he was no medium in the ordinary sense of the word, since, judging from the glimpses we get of his character and mentality in the Scriptures, he must have been a man of no mean intellectual and statesmanlike qualities, and, consequently, the very antithesis of the present-day medium, who is, as a rule, not only unintellectual and ill-informed, but occasionally both sensuous and sordid. Moreover, Ezekiel's visions, inasmuch as they possessed unquestionable significance for his contemporaries—especially for his countrymen to whom, in all probability, they were by no means wholly enigmatical, might be said to have been of great national importance and interest. Can any

one say the same of the visions and messages purporting to come through Spiritualistic mediums to-day? Far from being either grand, or ennobling, or even instructive, these messages are, without exception, trifling, unedifying, and footling,[1] and if, as Mr. Hopps suggests, not all of Ezekiel's visions emanated from the highest spiritual plane, though in this I disagree with him, it is perfectly certain that very few of the visions of a modern medium emanate from any plane save the lowest. But to proceed, no matter whether he possesses the psychic faculty or not, the ordinary Spiritualist invariably exhibits a tendency to imagine and invent. Mr. Hopps, for instance, after again trying to convince us that Ezekiel held regular séances after the nature of those held by Spiritualists to-day, tries to establish his case by asserting that the phrase, "I sat in mine house and the elders of Judah sat before me" (Ezekiel viii. 1), refers to an ordinary Spiritualistic séance, something in the nature of modern table-turning or trance

[1] No better instance of this can be afforded than the so-called spirit communications recorded in Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond" (published by Methuen & Co., 1916).

mediumship; and he subsequently states that the whole book of Ezekiel consists of a collection of records of similar sittings. He forgets, however, to add that whereas Ezekiel was never, as far as these verses show, convicted of falsehood and barefaced trickery, the majority of present-day mediums have been proved guilty of both; so that between Ezekiel and those whom Mr. Hopps designates his successors, there is, after all, a very remarkable difference, a difference upon which I will expatiate later on.

As one would suppose, Ezekiel is by no means the only prophet or patriarch whose dignity is assailed by Spiritualists. Isaiah is similarly likened to a modern clairvoyant, while the phrase "and it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not" (1 Kings xviii. 12), is by some miraculous system of distortion, worthy of the most ingenious species of rack ever invented, made to suggest levitation, i. e., that Elijah was to be lifted off the ground after the manner of a table at a twentieth-century Spiritualistic séance. Now I have seen many

tables slightly raised from the floor at séances, and it has always appeared to me —as well as to others present—that such levitation was not altogether incompatible with very materialistic trickery, which might very well have been performed by one of the sitters without any spirit intervention whatsoever. Indeed, I feel quite certain that there is nothing in this kind of levitation that could not be easily enacted by a conjuror, not necessarily as skillful as Messrs. Maskelyne and Devant.

I have, however, never yet seen, at any séance or elsewhere, a case of complete spiriting away, such as Obadiah prophesied would happen to Elijah, and which eventually did happen. (2 Kings ii. 11.) Perhaps some of our Spiritualistic friends will affirm such feats have actually come within their experience, and will be able to name the mediums who have accomplished them. Indeed, they should be able to do so, since they declare Elijah was simply a highly developed psychic, like the Fox Sisters, H. P. B., or Eusapia Palladino (whose exits from this material plane were not, I believe, accomplished in celestial chariots, an omis-

sion on the part of Jehovah for which believers in these notorious mediums will no doubt be able to proffer some kind of apology or explanation). Spiritualism, of course, claims Abraham, also, as one of its disciples, and his converse with angels is reckoned in the same category as the "spirit materializations" which are taking place to-day.

"Patriarchs, prophets and seers in Abraham's and Isaiah's time conversed with spirits and angels according to the Scriptures," Dr. Peebles writes,[1] "and why should not we? Neither God nor His laws have changed." Very possibly not, Dr. Peebles, but man apparently has, for seldom do we see nowadays in any class or profession the dignity and grandeur of character that we find in Moses, Samuel, Isaiah and other of the Hebrew leaders and prophets, and we do not hesitate to say that great indeed would be our disappointment were we to hope to find men possessing these characteristics in the ranks of modern mediumship.

Another point to bear in mind, when con-

[1] "What is Spiritualism?" (pp. 5-6). J. M. Peebles, M.D., M.A.

fronted with these impious comparisons, is that the Divine visitations and manifestations in the Old Testament were never resorted to, saving on very particular and momentous occasions, and for some very specific and rational purpose, as, for example, when God spoke to the child Samuel to warn him of the impending fate of Eli's house, and to Moses, from the burning bush, to command him to deliver the children of Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians. It is obviously quite otherwise with regard to modern mediumship, which is resorted to on every possible occasion, and often on the most trivial and ridiculous pretext. Hence, perhaps, it is small wonder that the revelations made by "spirit guides" or "controls" are invariably silly, and occasionally obscene and even blasphemous; and small wonder, too, that these spirits, far from telling us anything new, or instructive, or elevating, merely convey the impression that the spirit world from which they hail must be a strange mixture of a public elementary schoolroom, a pot-house bar and a lunatic asylum, and that we should be well advised to cling to this material life for as long a time as possible.

Spiritualists will of course assert that what I have just alluded to is Spiritism, and not Spiritualism, that Spiritism naturally puts one in touch with the denizens of the lowest spirit planes, but that Spiritualism enables its followers to see visions and witness manifestations of the same nature as were seen and witnessed by Moses, Isaiah, and other Biblical characters of the same degree of piety. My reply to this is that it is really a distinction with very little difference, that the séance of the Spiritualist generally owes its origin to much the same motives as the séance of the Spiritist, and that, at all events, there is nothing in the characters of even the best of the Spiritualists and Spiritists, any more than there is in the characters of any of us mere laymen and outsiders—to warrant visitations and—if one likes to call them so—phenomena—from such celestial sources as those specified in Holy Writ. As I have already stated, Abrahams and Isaiahs no longer exist, and, in comparison, the best of us to-day are very ordinary, very mediocre.

Another point that appeals to me in the argument that the phenomena claimed by

Spiritualists as emanating from the same spirit sources as those mentioned in the Bible, cannot be genuine, is that those who witness the phenomena do not experience even the slightest sensation of fear. Now most of us, I think, believe in spirits that appear spontaneously, that is to say, without the connivance of a medium or the assistance of the trumpet or table (indeed, the evidence relating to such phenomena is so accumulative and corroborative that few would attempt to question it), and those of us who have had any actual experience with these spontaneous apparitions, popularly designated ghosts, know only too well the awe and terror they inspire in humans and animals alike.

It was the same in Biblical days. When confronted with the angel of the Lord Balaam's ass falls down, whilst its rider bows his head to shut the vision out (Numbers xxii. 27–31); and Moses, when the Lord calls to him from the burning bush, hides his face, for he is afraid to look upon God (Exodus iii. 6). How different is this behavior from that of the mediums of today, who are acclaimed by Spiritualists as

the successors of Moses, Balaam, and other prophets of the Scriptures. These Spiritualistic mediums profess to see spirit after spirit with the utmost sang-froid. They have only to receive a fee, or the promise of one, and spirits of all sorts come with the regularity of an automaton, whilst they—the mediums—do not even turn a hair. Besides, I have never heard of a dog that has been present on any such occasion—and those of us who have tested dogs in haunted houses know how susceptible they are to fear—being in the least degree terrified.

Can it be that these mediums and Spiritualists are holier than Moses? If they are not, how else can they account for their total unconcern, and for the complete absence of either awe, fear, or astonishment at any of their exhibitions?

Just to show to what an extent this craze for the so-called psychic faculty has "caught on," I cannot refrain from referring to a little book sent me the other day, entitled "The Ministry of Angels."[1] We are pre-

[1] By Mrs. Joy Snell (published 1919, by G. Bell & Sons, Ltd).

pared for something wonderful from the following passage in the preface:

"It (the book) has been written because angels have told her (the authoress) that rare psychic powers have been bestowed on her, and she has been permitted to see what is hidden from the vast majority of mankind until after death."

But forewarned as we are, we are certainly not ready for what follows. It shocks us immeasurably.

The authoress states that when a child she awoke one night to find the room flooded with sunlight, and she goes on to describe two figures that suddenly appeared to her (pp. 11–12):

"One was that of a man," she says, "the other that of a woman. They were clad in shining, white robes. Around the head of each was a bright halo. The man stretched forth his hand and said: 'Be not dismayed; blessed shalt thou be.' Then the woman spoke and said: 'Behold the Saviour! And I am His mother.'"

The authoress does not seem to have been seized with any of that fear that came upon the prophets of old, when in the presence of God or His angels, or that the disciples felt

at the Transfiguration (St. Matthew xvii. 6), or when our Lord appeared to them after the Crucifixion (St. Luke xxiv. 37), but to have taken the most glorious and awe-inspiring of all possible visions simply as a prognostication of her own death. It never seems to have occurred to her—as it most certainly would have occurred to most people—how very extraordinary it was that she should have been singled out from among all other earthly beings for such a visitation—a visitation of a nature that—as far as one knows—has certainly never taken place since the days of our Lord.

Does the authoress imagine she possesses a character and qualities not only far—but immeasurably far superior to those of any of the countless human beings that have existed since the time of the Crucifixion, or does she attribute the phenomena to a development of psychic propensities which can certainly have no parallel?

The more rational and reflective among us will, I think, incline to the belief that such a visitation was actually subjective, and hallucinatory, and prompted by nothing more than colossal self-estimation, an opin-

ion which is more than justified by a further perusal—if patience permits—of the work. At any rate such testimony, since it is in no way corroborated, furnishes no proof whatever either of so-called spirit mediumship or of a psychic faculty, but merely serves to illustrate, as I have said before, to what a pitch of abandonment and lack of self-restraint this mad craze for Spiritualism, and the notoriety it sometimes brings with it, has been carried.

In accordance with this mad craze every reference to God and His angels appearing to, or communicating with man, to be met with in the Old Testament, is converted by Spiritualists into signifying the Almighty's approval and sanctioning of mediumship. In their attempt to force the Scriptures into reconciliation with the practices of their cult, they willfully blind themselves and those they seek to pervert, to this point—that it was one thing for God and His angels to demonstrate themselves spontaneously to man, and quite another thing for man to attempt, after the fashion of the modern medium, to call up spirits, indiscriminately, from the tomb and elsewhere. There is

certainly nothing whatever in anything God and His angels either said or did to warrant the assumption that they would sanction such proceedings. On the contrary, although there is an abundance of evidence in the Old Testament to show that God and the men he selected as His prophets and confidants fully recognized the fact that there were people (necromancers, sorcerers, witches, etc.) who knew, and were capable of putting into practice, the art of calling up genuine spirits, good and bad, and people who were able to perform all kinds of phenomena, sometimes through *bonâ fide* spirit agency, as, for example, Pharaoh's sorcerers (Exodus vii. 11–12), and sometimes through merely clever jugglery, it was against these people and their practices that God and His chosen representatives most sternly and uncompromisingly set their faces. If there is any doubt at all as to this, one has only to refer to the following:— Leviticus xx. 6, Leviticus xix. 31, Deuteronomy xviii. 10–12, 1 Samuel xxviii. 3 and 9, 2 Kings xxi. 6, Isaiah viii. 19, Exodus xxii. 18.

The mediumship of to-day, call it Spirit-

ualism, Spiritism or what you will, is simply an attempt—albeit a feeble and in most cases abortive one—at imitation of the necromancy, sorcery, and spirit trafficking alluded to in the above texts, the so-called guides and controls—Joey Kings, Fedoras and other spirit entities—bearing a remarkable resemblance to what were once known as witches' familiars.

Then—in those far-off Biblical times, when Chaldean and Egyptian magic had, without doubt, been developed to a very great degree, and man was in far closer touch with the primary elements in Nature than he finds it possible to be to-day, the necromancers, witches and the like were in all probability really able to conjure up spirits with comparative ease. But when these races gradually disappeared, their art seems —to a very large extent at least—to have perished with them. Other nations, the Greeks and Romans, for instance, and, later still, the Moors and Arabs all made desperate attempts to get into touch with the dead, and in their day, too, apparently worked all sorts of phenomena and miracles; but it is very doubtful if success very often came

to them, and it is more than likely that most of the wonders that were alleged to take place were manipulated through the assistance of an advanced knowledge of alchemy and jugglery, in which the Eastern nations, especially, in all times seem to have been past masters. The same sort of thing, the wild craving to pry into every forbidden mystery, the mad desire for power and notoriety, to be something quite distinct and different from anybody else, and the more sordid yet ever increasing love of riches, came steadily down through the centuries, contaminating other races and nations, and inducing them, too, to try and force open the door connecting this and the other world or worlds. Italy, Austria, France, England, all in their turn, became infected—all witnessed the same grim and secret nocturnal meetings in closed chambers, the same frantic endeavors to obtain satanic and other spirit aid by mystic symbolism, spells and incantation, the same practice of resorting at midnight to cross roads and other desolate places for the alleged purpose of holding witches' Sabbaths.

Our records of those times, however,

suggest very strongly that if the supernatural did occasionally respond to the incessant clamorings for it, most of the manifestations were simply due to charlatanism and trickery. And so it is to-day. The methods that were employed by the Babylonian and Assyrian necromancers in the days of Moses and other of those old-world prophets still remain in obscurity. Every now and then, perhaps, something rather inexplicable does occur at a séance, which makes one for a moment wonder if another key to fit the lock has at last been discovered, and intercourse with the spirit world, as practiced by the ancients, has at length been obtained; but apprehensions on this score speedily vanish, for that something does not respond again, and one is assured that the occurrence was purely incidental and as unlooked-for on the part of the medium, as on the part of any one else present. But that does not alter the fact that by the Almighty, the God of the Bible, which we in this country, at any rate, have been taught to honor and respect, any attempt at trafficking with denizens of the spirit world, good or bad (for the former see 1 Samuel xxviii. 15, 2 Samuel xii. 23, 1

Chronicles x. 13), no matter whether the attempt is successful or not, is denounced and forbidden. There must be no compromising, no equivocating with God, and if only, inasmuch as Spiritualism, citing Scripture for its own purpose, would seek to win converts by giving them a fallacious and entirely wrong interpretation of the Jehovah of the Jews' views on these matters, it is baneful and dangerous, and instead of being encouraged, as the more thoughtless and ignorant among us are inclined to do, it should be ruthlessly exposed and banned.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUALISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

WHEN we go on to consider the Spiritualists' views with regard to the New Testament, we find just the same barefaced attempts at contortion and perversion. The Christian belief that Jesus Christ was, and is God Incarnate is almost universally denied. Borrowing their terminology from Theosophy, many of the Spiritualists, even in this country, allude to our Lord as a great master, and by the majority, if not indeed by all of them, He is regarded as no more saintly, no more celestial than a medium, a few degrees, perhaps, more psychic and spirit-inspired than any present-day medium, but still one of precisely the same stock, and more or less—if not, indeed, quite—in the same category.

Dr. J. M. Peebles, for instance, in referring to our Lord, says:

"When that highly inspired man of Nazareth preached His radical doctrines in Palestine and performed His astonishing mediumistic works, etc." (*vide* "What is Spiritualism," pp. 5-6),

and again,

"Spiritualists, if intelligent, don't deny the existence of God—nor of Jesus of Nazareth, the mediumistic man" (same work, p. 10);

whilst Leon Denis again in "Christianity and Spiritualism" says:

"Jesus came, a powerful spirit and Divine missionary, an inspired medium" (p. 22).

And these views will be found to tally with those of practically all Spiritualists who cite the New Testament in their cause.

Christ, Whose spotless life and gentle and humane disposition made Him not merely stand out as quite distinct from any of the men and women of His time, but as equally distinct from any of His predecessors or successors, is fetched from off the pedestal, on which the love and more than justifiable adoration of centuries has placed Him, and dragged through the mire. One cannot, in-

deed, speak strongly enough on the subject. One can only say this, that any attempt to classify one of such infinite and unparalleled grace, mental beauty, and moral perfections as our Blessed Lord, with those who, more often than not, prove to be of sordid nature, inferior intellect, and highly questionable morals, namely mediums, is both blasphemous in the extreme and absurd, and one can only conclude that those who are capable of such a classification are either hopeless lunatics (more dangerous than many of those imprisoned in asylums), or else that they owe their inspirations to the most malignant and mischievous type of spirit, the only type which, in my opinion, is likely to respond to the beck and call of human beings.

After such profanity one is not surprised at anything a Spiritualist asserts. Therefore the following quotation (*vide* p. 27 of "Christianity, Churchianity or Spiritualism," by J. M. Peebles, M.D.) "true Spiritualism and true Christianity are essentially one" does not give us the shock it otherwise might have done. The mind that is capable of such a grotesquely fallacious representation of Jesus Christ as that pre-

sented by Dr. Peebles is capable of any outrageous fallacy, and it is only in keeping with his unconquerable habit of perversion, that he should persuade himself and try to persuade others that the inimitable creed of Christianity is merely another name for his own unwholesome, illogical and ephemeral cult of Spiritualism.

Christ's teaching, as gleaned from the mere text of the New Testament, strikes most readers as the essence of directness and simplicity, quite in harmony with His character; but Spiritualism, the true Spiritualism Dr. Peebles and others boast about, invests everything Christ said or did with an air of profound mystery and subtle meaning. The parables that perfectly well explain themselves to readers of any age and with any intelligence at all, are declared to be only interpretable to psychics and initiates in the innermost mysteries of Higher Thought, and the texts usually quoted in support of these assertions (namely St. Matthew xiii. 10–11 and St. Mark iv. 11–12), are also fondly believed to prove conclusively that Christ in selecting the Apostles, chose them solely for their alleged mediumistic powers.

Spiritualists cannot, or will not, realize that this act of selection marked a most unique and momentous occasion, and that the Apostles, after the call, owed their increased wisdom and power to perform miracles, not to any such sordid, unequivocally denounced agency as necromancy, or, to use the modern term, mediumship, but wholly to Divine—as utterly distinct from ordinary spirit—influence. Christ obviously chose His Apostles for their characters—they were the type of men most likely to make sound and capable preachers, and to carry on His mission of love and moral reformation; men possessing attributes of a nature very different from that characterizing the so-called psychist and medium of to-day. But, if any further proof of this be needed, one has only to compare the miracles Christ and His disciples wrought with the trumpery phenomena produced by these mediums. Christ not only healed the blind, the halt, the maimed and those suffering from such incurable diseases as leprosy, but He brought back the dead to life, and made the tossing, roaring sea lie still and silent. Could any of the present-day professional mediums, with all their

boasted super-normal and highly developed spiritual faculties, do the same? No, they could not. Far from doing what Christ and His Apostles did, for the good of mankind, mediums never, through their alleged spirit phenomena and spirit influence, perform anything really useful, or beneficial or even exceptionally wonderful. Far from restoring the blind, or raising the dead, they cannot even cure, on the spot, an ordinary cold in the head, make the hair grow again on the head of a middle-aged or long bald old person, or cause a fresh natural tooth to suddenly usurp the place of one that is badly decayed. They cannot even with a word or wave of their hand stop a bird in full flight in the air, or bring to a halt, by a mere glance, an earwig or a black beetle. To give them their due, however, they do not attempt to do the really marvelous—perhaps they are not quite sure of the capacities of their friends on the other side, who obviously have not much in common with St. Peter nor St. John—but content themselves with trying to make trumpets speak, tambourines dance, tables and chairs rise and walk, and flowers and sometimes fish—even eels—appear ap-

parently from nowhere; occasionally varying their program with materializations, which "phenomena," in reality, are very feeble, unconvincing and not at all alarming spirit impersonations, usually by "controls" and other professed denizens from the spirit world. But whereas Christ and His Apostles were always successful in their undoubted miracles, "mediums" are not infrequently detected in the most puerile and vulgar acts of deception and trickery.

There is really no similarity whatever between Christ and His Apostles and the modern medium and Spiritualist; indeed, the gulf of differences separating them is so wide that it could not be bridged.

Christ's doctrine of repentance is tacitly accepted as a possible modifier in the chain of reincarnation (reincarnation being a theory in which the majority, at least, of Spiritualists, even those who profess what they term "true" Christianity, believe), but His equally essential teachings with regard to forgiveness are discountenanced and ignored. Spiritualists apparently are much divided as to what happens to the soul after death. Some, as may be gathered from cer-

tain passages in Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond," believe that man goes on in his immaterial state from very much the same place as he left off in his physical body, that the spirit world is merely an ethereal counterpart of this, containing houses like ours, though made only of a sort of emanation from this earth, and places—presumably shops and public-houses—where clothes made from a species of decayed worsted, cigars composed of ethers, gases and essences, and, of course, whiskies-and-sodas (without the last-named, according to the great majority of mediums, no life, spiritual or otherwise, would seem to be complete) could be procured. Such a view of another life—so utterly contradictory to the teachings of Jesus Christ—appears to me very wild and extravagant, but, as a correspondent of the *Sunday Times* in the issue for 30th September, 1917, remarks, "we must not take Sir Oliver Lodge too seriously"; still it finds not a few supporters, and these may be found chiefly in the ranks of those Spiritualists and Psychical Researchers, who, having an unreasoning respect for titles, blindly accept anything a man possessing one may happen

to say, no matter how irrational and footling his remarks may appear to saner and less easily influenced people. Another view, and the one generally adopted by those Spiritualists in this country, who profess to be what they are pleased to term "true" Christians, is that the soul, on parting with the material body at physical dissolution, enters the lowest spiritual planes, i.e., those in closest contact to this world, where it remains for just as long as its passions and earthly cravings and tendencies remain with it. This view, to some extent at least, tallies with many Churchmen's opinions with regard to a Purgatory or intermediate state, and finds much support in Christ's actual teachings; but, as might be expected by any one who knows them, the Spiritualists who embrace it soon fly off to something wildly improbable, and uncorroborated, saving by their own mad, freakish fancies, and ignorant, if not willful, Biblical misrepresentations and distortions. The doctrine of a heaven is accepted under the theosophical camouflage of "the highest spiritual planes," whilst that of a hell is wholly discredited, the vilest and most earth-tied of spirits, though confined to

the lowest spiritual planes, being believed to have the power to wander there *ad libitum*, indulging themselves to excess in all their old passions, and perfectly able, when the mood seizes them, or some one invokes them, to get into immediate touch with the material world, whose inhabitants they can tempt and annoy at will.

Those of us who believe in hauntings and in disturbances in houses and localities by spirits, which apparently come there spontaneously, must accept the theory that there is a spirit world—perhaps more than one—very close to this world, but there is no actual proof that its denizens were ever of our flesh and blood, or anything to discountenance the possibility, if not, indeed probability, either that they be demons such as are referred to in more than one passage of the New Testament (St. Matthew xii. 27, Acts xix. 13–14), or that they belong to one or other of the types of spirit recorded in Isaiah xiii. 21. But the doctrine—taught and practiced by all Spiritualists—to which Christians and, especially, Catholics, take the very greatest exception, is that of the invoked intercourse between the dead and the living.

Taking advantage of the fact that many Christians and Churchmen believe that we who are here on earth should pray for spirits in the intermediate state, i.e., those capable of rising to a higher sphere, and on the other hand that spirits who have passed over should pray for those left behind in the physical world, Spiritualists have construed such a momentous happening as the Transfiguration and such passages as those contained in 1 Peter iii. 19, 1 Peter iv. 6, and Revelations vi. 10, into signifying full license to mediums and others of their ilk, to get in touch with spirits of the dead whenever the mood (or prospect of money) seizes them. Now the Bible does not deny the possibility of the dead returning on rare occasions and for some very specific reason, but nothing save the wildest and most perverted stretch of the imagination could metamorphose the Transfiguration, or any of the texts I have mentioned, or any other passages in the Bible, into signifying sanction for such intercourse with the dead as is alleged to be practiced by the present-day medium.

Mediums, however much they may pretend to the contrary, and be backed up in

their pretensions by such would-be authorities on occult matters as Blavatsky and certain titled scientists who are posing as Psychical Researchers, know absolutely nothing as to what govern conditions on the other side. Samuel, when called up by the witch of Endor, sternly rebuked Saul for bringing him back, hence it is quite conceivable that the efforts made by mediums to forcibly communicate with the spirits of the dead, and through their agency to perform all kinds of phenomena, may, even though unsuccessful (which, I believe, is almost invariably the case) entail a very considerable amount of suffering on those who are invoked.

Surely this is a probability meriting our very gravest consideration. In any case the mere thought of those we love and respect being forced to respond to the call of mere strangers, people out to gratify their curiosity and fill their purses, is revolting in the extreme, and for this reason, chiefly, perhaps, the Catholic Church, and, indeed, all Christian Churches, as well as all really humane and thoughtful people strongly condemn séances, both public and private ones alike.

But there is another danger in connection with the practice of Spiritualism, which I may as well deal with here, when specializing on the religious and moral aspects of the question, and that is the effects of these attempts at spirit intercourse on the characters of the living people who partake in them.

The unreliable and often mischievous nature of the messages obtained at sittings clearly demonstrates that such messages do not emanate either from intelligent or holy sources, and that if they come from *bonâ fide* spirits, these spirits can only be on a very low plane, and are therefore in no way calculated to improve either the mind or the morals.

It is, I believe, a fact that can be well substantiated, that the majority of mediums at all events—people who have been persuaded to develop their so-called psychic faculties and devote the bulk of their time to going into trances (i.e., yielding up their minds to whatever controlling spirit cares to come along), to automatic writing, crystal gazing, and table turning—speedily degenerate, and in the end become absolutely demoralized and

untrustworthy. That is a fact, I repeat, which I have reasons for believing can be thoroughly well confirmed, as can also the fact that many of the people who continually attend séances, develop manias which eventually spoil their lives and not infrequently lead to suicide. Can, I ask, such happenings be due to any agency that is beneficial or desirable, whether spirit or otherwise? It must be remembered that there were Spiritualists in the days of the New Testament—a set of people quite distinct from the disciples and followers of Christ, with regard to whom both our Lord and His Apostles uttered many grave warnings (see St. Matthew xii. 27, St. Matthew xxiv. 24–26, Acts xix. 13–14, Galatians i. 8–9, Revelations xxii. 18–19), and it is in these Spiritualists or necromancers, rather than in any of the miracle workers of the Old Testament, that the present-day mediums and their supporters find their counterparts. There is, indeed, a similarity between them that is most marked and clearly perceptible to any but the hopelessly stupid or willfully blind.

It will doubtless be protested again by certain Spiritualists, those who, claiming to have

got beyond the stage of seeking for mere physical demonstrations, assert that they are quite distinct from Spiritists, as they somewhat superciliously designate them, that the visions they see and the messages they receive are of a very superior order, almost, indeed, if not quite, identical with those seen and received by the Apostles. Certain of this fraternity have gone so far as to tell me that they have visited, whilst in trances, the most consecrated and zealously exclusive parts of Heaven, and frequently conversed with saints and some of the very holiest of the great teachers and thinkers of the past—privileges, they assured me, that were strictly confined to devotees of Spiritualism and initiates in all its innermost mysteries.

In order to give an air of authority to these pretensions they resort again to the Scriptures, this time to the New Testament, and pointing to St. Peter, St. John and other of the Apostles, assume that in them there are evidences of their own ability to come in touch with the Divine side of the spirit world. What the Apostles did, they argue, we can do; their authority is ours; for they only possessed psychic faculties similar to ours.

They forget, however, as I have already endeavored to explain, that the Apostles lived in a time of the greatest moment in the world's history; that they belonged to a race specially selected and watched over by God; that the gifts bestowed on them were only apparent after their call—there is nothing to prove they had the so-called psychic faculty prior to this event—that though it is true they saw visions, and heard voices, and spoke in strange tongues, etc., it is also equally true they performed miracles of the greatest possible benefit to their fellow-creatures (which is certainly not the case with any of the present-day Spiritualists); and that they were all men—with the exception of Judas, who owed his downfall to a national weakness taken advantage of by the devil—of the most exceptional moral character, which, as I have pointed out before, cannot possibly be said of the modern Spiritualists; so that the latter, whether initiates of the very highest order or not, have really no warrant whatever for the spiritual privileges to which they lay claim, and consequently there is little reason, if any, for assigning them to a differ-

ent and separate category from that of the ordinary Spiritist.

For instances of the many disastrous effects Spiritualism—albeit the higher branch of the cult—has on character, and to show to what an extent human egotism, vanity and self-importance are fostered by it, I cannot do better than refer to a work entitled "Talks with the Dead." It is edited—and, from what the context suggests, presumably written—by John Lobb, F.R.G.S., F.R.Hist. S., and published by a firm called after his name. The book is well garnished with texts, as, per example, on the title page we find "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus" (St. Mark ix. 4), and on the page opposite the title page, under a photograph purporting to be that of "one of the editor's band of spirit ministers" we get, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister?" (Hebrews i. 14), and everywhere one is met with attempts to compare the mediumship of to-day with the Divine inspiration and highest spiritual agency of Old and New Testament days. See, for example, page 86,

where we read these remarkable lines: "The second chapter (i.e. of Acts) contains an account of the first séance held by the disciples after Christ's Ascension"; needless to say, one looks for it in vain; page 85, where we find that the angel that appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire (Exodus iii. 2), and the granting to Abraham of a sign from God in the form of a smoking furnace, are likened to the trumpery performances of the so-called spirit control "John King," and scattered throughout the book other equally nonsensical and profane comparisons, too numerous to mention. Text after text, too, is mutilated and contorted to suit the editor or author's purpose, but one would have credited him with rather more caution and astuteness than to give away his cause so abruptly and completely as he does on page 88, where, after quoting Daniel v. 5 (which narrates the incident of the writing on the wall) he goes on to say:

"Many sitters will attest that hands frequently take hold of theirs, pat their face, and allow them to hold them. Scores of times I have held the materialized hands of spirits. They have taken from the pockets of those present sweets and placed them in my mouth. . . .

A small musical box out of order has often by spirit hands been taken to pieces and set going, etc."

Precisely, Mr. Lobb; it is just those vulgar and foolish antics you speak about that place the phenomena contrived by the present-day medium on an entirely different footing from that of the miracles performed by God's select, either in the Old or New Testament; and which makes one positively certain that if due to spirit agency, at all, that agency can only emanate from the lowest possible planes.

It is hardly necessary to add, perhaps, that, after little gambols of this kind, Mr. Lobb and his friends should be visited by the spirits of all kinds of eminents. On page 133, for instance, he says:

"At the close of my services in London and the Provinces clairvoyants present often remain to let me know the number and names of spirits present on the platform and in the building. They name them one after another—C. H. Spurgeon, Hugh Price Hughes, W. E. Gladstone, Geo. Muller, etc.";

whilst in other parts of the book references are made to the return of Mrs. Catherine Booth, Sir Edwin Arnold, Charles Dickens,

John Wesley, John Bunyan, John Dryden, and, of course, William Shakespeare (no Spiritualistic séance is complete without either Shakespeare or Dickens, who would appear to have many "egos" and to be capable of much division, for they are often alleged to be present in more circles than one at the same time). That there can be found people ready to believe that the spirits of such of our great departed as Shakespeare and Dickens should leave all the solemnities of the tomb to attend meetings and séances presided over by men of no greater mental capacity than John Lobb and other present-day Spiritualists, is almost inconceivable. It can, in fact, only be accounted for by one or other of the following assumptions: either that the people who swallow such absurdities are naturally weak-minded—were born so—or that constant attendance at such circles has brought about a mental degeneracy which is, very possibly, really due to spirit influence, the influence of that type of spirit most likely to respond to evocation on such occasions, namely, impersonating demons, or to use a Spiritualistic expression "elementals."

My reference to Mr. Lobb and his work

thus serves a dual purpose—it demonstrates the extent to which human vanity as well as human credulity can be carried, when influenced by Spiritualism; and, sad to say, the air of extreme self-satisfaction and smugness so apparent in every page of the volume, is but characteristic of the generality of all so-called exponents of the cult.

To continue. I have referred to two of the theories entertained by Spiritualists with regard to the fate of the spirit on leaving the material body, I now come to a third—that of reincarnation.

In brief, reincarnation is a travesty of the sequence of cause and effect. According to its doctrine action, whether physical or mental, leaves its inevitable traces, and these traces, whatever the Bible may say to the contrary, cannot be wiped out in a moment. On them and them only rests our future—there can be no intervening agency. There is, in fact, no such thing as a sudden change of heart; sudden conversion and the realization of forgiveness are only fancies; they have no existence apart from our imagination; and the highest planes of spiritual perfection can only be obtained by a drastic sys-

tem of purification which may last throughout centuries. "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" is a delusion and a snare. Man, himself, must blot out his sins, and, in order to do this, he must keep on coming back to this physical world in a fresh body till he leads a life absolutely free from any vestige of vice. Even as man fashioned his present fate in the past, so he is fashioning his future fate in the immediate present—and what is done cannot be undone. It is a cold, comfortless and really hopeless creed, for it would seem to be quite impossible to rid ourselves of all vice, especially if we regard vice—as we ought to do—as something more than the mere indulgence of our cravings for sexual intercourse or such acts as are punishable by the law. Greed, selfishness, and scandal-mongering are all strictly speaking vices, and what man or woman is there, who, looking back upon his or her life, can honestly say that it is absolutely free from all three of them? Hence, it follows that although the world is, according to geologists, many millions of years old, no one alive now—or within living man's memory—is within

measurable distance of getting to the highest spiritual planes.

It will thus be seen that the principles of reincarnation are at total variance with the Atonement and the very fundamentals of Christ's teachings, so much so that one wonders how Spiritualists embracing such principles can possibly call themselves Christians. But there are many who do, many who, regarding our Lord as a mere spirit-inspired man and medium, cite the following passages from the Gospels (notably St. John iii. 3–11, and St. Matthew xviii. 3) in support of their theory that Christ Himself was an expounder of the doctrine of reincarnation.

To ordinary and rational minds the meaning in these texts will appear quite simple and direct; our Lord points out to Nicodemus and the disciples the necessity of becoming simple and trustful as children, in order to gain admittance to Heaven; and it would be difficult to realize how any one could read another meaning in these texts, had one not learnt from a personal knowledge of Spiritualists that their imagination is only equaled

by their astounding self-esteem. Believing, or pretending to believe, that the spirits of Shakespeare and Dryden attend séances given by comparative nonentities, and make tables and other articles jump about the room, Spiritualists stick at nothing, and we find them attributing to our Lord's sayings cabalistic secrets that were in total variance with His character, and which He would never even have conceived.

Needless to say, our Lord's promise to the penitent thief on the Cross that he should be with Him that day in Paradise, rules out any right on the part of the Spiritualists to claim Christ as a reincarnationist. Indeed, there is not a tittle of evidence to show that the doctrine of reincarnation is in any way alluded to in the Scriptures; and, in all probability, it owes its foundation to nothing more substantial than sheer craving for novelty; anyhow, it is such an outrage on common sense, in its utter disregard of such important factors as heredity and the increase of population, that no one would dream of taking it seriously, were it not unhappily true that there are a great many people—weak-kneed Christians of little sound judgment or

logic—who are easily influenced by the shallow, persuasive oratory characteristic of so many of the leading Spiritualists and Theosophists, and that the latter without scruple try to destroy faith in Christianity, which is by far the noblest and most consoling creed the world has ever known, and offer in its stead their fanciful and high-falutin' hotch-potch known as Spiritualism and Theosophy. It is, in fact, on behalf of these more gullible and unstable followers of Christ—no matter to what actual denomination they belong—that a crusade against Spiritualism and Theosophy is now so urgently needed.

It is not the Cross that is in danger, it will never be in danger so long as the race embraces men and women possessing high ideals coupled with sound judgment and common sense, but only this one section of society, and it is to save both their souls and bodies that this challenge to their Spiritualistic seducers has gone forth.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITUALISM AND THE CHURCHES

CAMOUFLAGED, as the sinister attitude of Spiritualists is towards the Old and New Testaments, under apparent attempts to merely reconcile the tenets of Spiritualism with those of the Bible, there is no effort whatever made to disguise the malicious intentions of Spiritualists towards the Churches, which they never miss an opportunity of attacking. No worse offender in this respect could be found than Dr. Peebles. After describing—in a pamphlet entitled "Christianity, Churchianity or Spiritualism" (p. 18)—a séance he attended, at which a certain Mr. Withal made the remarkable but not very modest statement that he had come into psychic relations with "a very exalted" spirit who lived bodily at the same time as Jesus of Nazareth, and after expressing his admiration at the said Mr. Withal's calm and dignified style (people who make such

astounding assertions as Mr. Withal need a little calmness to carry them through), Dr. Peebles proceeds—in a manner that shows he himself is wanting in that very quality he apparently admires so much in others, namely, dignity—to launch into a most violent unrestrained attack on the Churches. He begins by telling us that, under the Churchianity of Roman Constantine and his bishops, etc., blood, due to persecution, began to flow "in crimson currents," and proceeds to comment on the "two millions" of human lives lost in the Crusades, the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, and the Edict of February 15th, 1568, whereby, he alleges, the Holy Office of Romanism condemned all the inhabitants of The Netherlands to be put to death as heretics. It is not only the Catholics, however, who come in for his denunciation, for on page 20 he says ". . . at later date John Calvin, Beza, and other sectarian bigots wrote books and pamphlets defending the right and lawfulness of religious persecutions," and (on same page) "John Knox of Scotland, appealing to the Word of God, declared that 'Those guilty of idolatry and heresy should be put to death.'" Further

on he graciously allows that Roman Catholics and Protestants, "alternating in power," slaughter each other.

After haranguing what he is pleased to term Churchianity in this rather crude and elementary fashion, apparently oblivious of the fact that butchery was by no means confined to Christian countries, but was going on—as it is periodically now, in spite of united Christian effort—all over the world, quite as much, if not more, among races who had no orthodox denominational creeds, as among those who had, Dr. Peebles blossoms out into verse. For example, on page 21, we find this couplet:

> "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
> Three thousand Frenchmen sent below,"

which he informs us was sung in Berlin—presumably in 1870—after a victory over the French by united bands of "Catholic and Protestant" citizens parading the streets. After the late Great War one cannot, of course, be surprised at anything Huns may have done, but one wonders whether in the ranks of those united bands of citizens Dr. Peebles refers to there may not have been a

few German Spiritualists. How can he vouch for the fact that they consisted entirely of Catholics and Protestants?

Dr. Peebles, however, allows his animus against the Churches to carry him from bad to worse, for after informing us that all the persecutions and bloody wars (I presume he would say the same of the late greatest of all wars) he has specified were the legitimate outcome of orthodox theology, he concludes with the scathing declaration that "The orthodox theology of salvation through blood, the blood of our ancient Jew, is still preached in our orthodox pulpits."

In order, perhaps to preserve some semblance of artistic balance, the author, after such a thick laying on of blackness, thinks it necessary to afford us some relief, and, consequently, proceeds to discuss the merits of Spiritualism, which he valiantly endeavors to show is superior in every way to "Churchianity." Crudely and unusually spiteful, however, as these attacks of Dr. Peebles on the Churches must seem to most impartial people, they are, as I have said, merely samples of the methods employed by many other Spiritualists. Mr. John Lobb in

his "Talks with the Dead" tells us that the spirit of the late Rev. William Rogers, or "Hang Theology Rogers," as Mr. Lobb terms him (p. 113), comes back on purpose to let us all know that "Creeds and dogmas find no favor on the other side," whilst in a paragraph headed "The Christian Church To-day" the same author remarks, "The Christian Church to-day fails to arrest the attention or command the respect of the world to whom they preach: their words fall dead without the proof of works"; and a few lines further on, "The power of the Spirit has forsaken the Church of to-day." These observations not unnaturally lead one to inquire whether the author considers the power of the Spirit has forsaken the Churches for Spiritualism, and whether he honestly believes the latter commands the respect of the world, because, if so, he could surely have afforded us better instances in support of his views than those of spirits returning to this earth merely for the purpose of playing such foolish tricks as putting sweets in people's mouths, thumping on tables, and dropping fish from the ceiling. Such phenomena surely must refute the idea that the "Power

of the Spirit" is to be found in Spiritualism, or that Spiritualism commands the respect of anything like so large a portion of humanity as the world.

Indeed, all Mr. Lobb's intended biting criticism of the Churches could be responded to—were it worth while—with, perhaps, greater vigor and certainly far more truth.

Mr. Leon Denis in "Christianity and Spiritualism" is condescending enough to admit (pp. 27–28) that the thoughts of Christ still live in the teachings of the Church, but that they are dished up in a very adulterated form, owing to the desire of such ecclesiastics as Popes, etc., "to fortify and render absolute the authority of the Church."

To this, of course, the natural reply is—if the teachings of the Churches is, possibly, a combination of Divine tenets and accessories introduced by theologians, what about Spiritualism which is, unquestionably, a medley of Babylonian Paganism, diluted Chaldean and other kinds of necromancy, gnosticism, Rosicrucianism, Buddhism, Theosophy, Unitarianism, and a dozen and one other isms, which help to make it a most unsavory and indigestible mess. Spiritualists should be re-

minded very strongly that before throwing dirty water at other people, they should first look to their own house. After speaking thus sneeringly of Theologians, Mr. Leon Denis continues (p. 28) in this strain:

"It is by the aid of the light of this new revelation, both scientific and philosophical, which has already spread throughout the whole world, under the name of modern Spiritualism, that we will seek to free the doctrine of Jesus from the obscurity in which the work of centuries has enveloped it."

Having thus excited our curiosity and raised our expectations mountains high to know how Spiritualism purposes to achieve a task, in which Mr. Denis delicately suggests the Churches have failed, he proceeds to let us down badly by stating that the method Spiritualism intends to employ is that of "an imposing train of experimental proofs," which will furthermore prove that Spiritualism and primitive Christianity are identical.

Now the experimental proofs which Mr. Leon Denis would use for this purpose must be the phenomena produced by such mediums as Eglington, H.P.B., Eusapia Palladino,

and present-day birds of the same feather—there are no other—therefore it is obviously by these phenomena, proved to be fallacious, that the wonderful scientific and philosophic cult of Spiritualism seeks to eclipse the Church; to demonstrate, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Christ was simply an ordinary medium, that the hidden meaning which they—and they only—attribute to His Gospels, are mere common or garden secrets of Spiritualism (secrets with which all the initiates of that creed are familiar), and that Spritualism and the earliest form of Christianity—Christ's Christianity, as distinct from the Church's Christianity—are identical. Unfortunately for Spiritualism, however, despite the patronage of a few such eminent scientists as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir W. F. Barrett, the late Sir William Crookes (this patronage, I suppose, accounts for the dubbing of the cult—scientific), the bubble of mediumship has been too mercilessly pricked for the common-sense man-in-the-street to place much confidence in what is left, and it will take something far more subtle and convincing than any of the spirit phenomena, or to give them their more appropriate name,

"spirit stunts," that we have lately seen to induce the main body of Churchmen to discard their old faith in a sanctified Christ and adopt the mere caricature of Divinity Spiritualists proffer in its stead.

Spiritualists mockingly remark that the Church has failed, but do they honestly think that Spiritualism either has succeeded, or can succeed, in the future. Its phenomenal side —the side on which it so largely depends—is at the present moment more debatable than ever. Professional medium after medium has been exposed, and many of those who have escaped so far may not unreasonably be deemed to owe their present security to the West End patronage they have been lucky enough to secure. Still their turn may come, and further striking demonstrations of the hyper-credulity of certain of the most eminent scientists, to whose recommendation they owe so much, may, even yet, be forthcoming. Despite its boasts to the contrary, the foundations of Spiritualism are unstable in the extreme, and, in my opinion, a slight breeze—let alone a searching wind—would bring the whole fabric to the ground.

To revert to its claims of success. We

have seen, I think, that they cannot possibly be said to rest on its alleged spiritual phenomena; hence, I suppose, it is to the doctrinal side of the cult that we must look for them. But what do we find here? Long dissertations on love and brotherhood. Spiritualism is declared to be a kind of freemasonry that knits together not only the hearts of men, but their souls, a freemasonry consisting of a much more poignant and durable bond of love than that advocated and practiced by other creeds. It is also declared to be a bond of love and brotherhood which is not confined to this material plane; on the contrary, in accordance with the principle of progress and evolution (evolution is apparently one of the fundamentals of the doctrine of Spiritualism), its practices are carried on in the spiritual world, where marriages are said to take place as they do on earth.

In this connection it would be as well, perhaps, to remind Spiritualists that words only do not make character, any more than mere tenets, of necessity, lead to practice. It is doubtless very pleasant to be able to imagine oneself transported to the very

highest spiritual planes—planes from which so many—perhaps all—of your friends are hopelessly barred; and extremely gratifying to be able to assure those who flock in hundreds to listen to your alleged psychic exploits, that you have been to far-off realms and seen celestial visions, which are not for the rank and file, but reserved for the greatest and wisest of the initiates of Spiritualism only. Perhaps it is this mood that Mr. Leon Denis has in mind when he refers to the philosophic side of Spiritualism. But it is a mood hardly in keeping with that spirit of love and fraternity breathed out so often from Spiritualistic pulpits, and referred to so constantly in Spiritualistic pamphlets; and it is not altogether in harmony with the doctrine of humility preached in the Sermon on the Mount, which Spiritualists are so fond of holding up as a much-needed example to theologians and churchgoers. However, as it is undoubtedly the spirit blatantly observable in about ninety-nine per cent of Spiritualists, it makes one wonder if, after all, they are the big success they believe themselves to be. Surely the success of a creed is—or should be—gauged by the effect it has on

moral character. Now I can call to mind no instance of Spiritualism having produced any particularly great moralist or philanthropist. I have from time to time come across many people professing this creed, but so far, not one of them has exhibited any very lovable quality or any very special virtue. On the contrary, by far the majority of those Spiritualists with whom I have come in contact, have been indisputably egotistical, self-opinionated, arrogant, conceited, absolutely self-satisfied and extremely dogmatic. All the failings, in fact, that they so generously attribute to churchgoers they themselves possess—and possess in an almost unlimited degree. Nor am I alone in this opinion. My verdict is only that of numbers of others—outsiders one may say (I, myself, am an undenominational Christian), but then you must remember that it is the outsider who sees most of the game, and consequently it is the outsider who is best able to judge. Inasmuch then as Spiritualism cannot possibly be said to have an elevating effect on character, and may very justly be said to have the reverse, I fail to see how it can be described as anything whatever in

the nature of a success, unless it be a success for the Powers inimical to the genuine advancement and moral welfare of the human race.

On the other hand, the Churches are not altogether undeserving of criticism. The accusation of narrow-mindedness and lack of sympathy that Spiritualists and others have leveled against them is not wholly without substance. They—especially those that have temporarily wielded the most power—have been autocratic and dictatorial, paying too little heed to the great example set them by the gentle, Divine Being they have all made pretense of imitating. Assuredly the greatest worth of Christianity lies in the heed it bestows on spiritual and moral progress, and the greatest care should always be taken to see that candidates offering themselves for Holy Orders have the moral and spiritual progress of mankind at heart. Very obviously this has not always been the case, and incalculable harm has been inflicted on the cause of the Churches—of all Christian denominations—because in a matter like this the careless public does not differentiate—through men taking Holy Orders solely for

the sake of bettering their social position; or—as so often happens—leading a slack life on a comparatively large stipend in some quiet country village; where, in such counties as Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Devon, hunting forms an additional attraction. Hunting parsons are often jocularly referred to as good "sports," but the person who speaks thus lightly of a priest or minister, if he ever thinks at all, does not think of the welfare of the Christian Churches. It ill befits a pledged disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, who was the quintessence of all that was kindly and decorous, to be seen, inspired by cruel motives, and often three-quarters drunk, careering madly on bareback across fields in pursuit of a small and defenseless animal.

The Church of Christ is not for such men as these, their proper vocation in life is to serve behind the pot-house bar, or as a marker in a billiard saloon, where their coarse jest and often blasphemous jokes would fall on no shocked ears.

Certainly the Churches need reforming, and no one knows this better than the priesthood themselves, but the powers that be

move slowly, and many years may elapse before such a purging and purification, as alone can be of any real benefit to the cause of Christ, can be effected. Let us hope it will be sooner than I, for one, anticipate. On the other hand, if the Churches have seemed, at times, merely a cloak for black sheep, it is also equally true that they have been the generating instrument of many of the greatest moralists and public benefactors the world has ever produced. With all their faults the Christian Churches have been proved to possess many virtues; and it has been shown that they have exercised a restraining and ennobling influence on the masses, such as has certainly never been exercised by any other creed, and which neither Spiritualism nor Theosophy have ever given the slightest sign of emulating.

We have now seen—in brief—the attitude of Spiritualism towards the Churches. Let us now review—also in brief—the attitude of the Churches towards Spiritualism.

Whilst all the Churches are, perhaps, equally emphatic in their disapproval of Spiritualism as a whole, they differ somewhat in their views regarding its various

tenets. Most Protestants, for example, do not admit even the possibility of spirits of any kind, no matter whether of the dead or of those that have never been in the flesh, responding to the call of living beings and perpetrating the phenomena attributed to them. They declare—and I think with reason—that it is time enough to talk of spirit influence being present at séances, when we have first of all eliminated all possibility of fraud and other natural—though, perhaps, at present unknown—physical causes.

With regard to this same question, Catholics, on the other hand, do not commit themselves to any very decided statements. While admitting the possibility of the return of the dead under very rare occasions and with some very specific reason, as, for instance, in the case of Samuel and the witch of Endor, they do not consider it at all likely that the blessed dead would come back for the trivial purpose of manifesting at a séance. They believe that other spirits might respond to the invitation of mediums, but that all such spirits would be evil and of the same type as the demons in the Bible.

They express, however, no definite judgment as to the nature of the phenomena, or whether they are produced through physical or super-physical agency, but both they and the Protestant Churches roundly condemn Spiritualism as being in total opposition to the Divine Will. The Roman Catholic Church of the two is, perhaps, the more inclined to confine its condemnation of Spiritualism to theological grounds. It not unnaturally unites with all other denominations in desiring to protect its followers from fraud and charlatanism, which it considers may possibly take place at séances, but it views the matter more seriously from the religious standpoint. First of all, the Catholic Church regards any attempt whatever at communication with the spirit world, in other than the form of prayer set down in her liturgy and based on the precepts of the New Testament, as in direct opposition to the Divine Will, and thinks it Her right to warn Her children strongly against such practices. She has a strong basis for her objections in certain passages in the Bible to which I have already referred. She is fully aware that Spiritualists triumphantly point to the fact

that many of the saints had visions, but she wishes to emphasize the point that the visions of the saints came to them quite spontaneously, i. e., without being sought, and, for that reason, cannot in any way be placed in the same category with the trances of the so-called mediums.

The Churches, one and all of course, utterly condemn the attempts made by the Spiritualists to liken our Lord and His Apostles, as well as the chosen of God in the Old Testament, to present-day mediums—their line of argument being, I believe, very much the same as that which I adopted when dealing with the question in a previous chapter.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church, besides looking upon the mere holding of Spiritualistic séances as quite contrary to Christ's teachings, also regards all such séances as a source of the utmost peril to those who partake in them. She believes that both mediums and sitters, in courting intercourse with the other world, open a door to spiritual forces of a nature that is totally unknown to them, and which, in all probability, would be of an entirely evil origin; but no matter from what source these forces emanate, inasmuch

as "evocation" is in direct opposition to Divine Will, the Catholic Church believes no response can be productive of any good, but may very easily lead to a degeneration of the morals and faith in Christianity of those who participate in the proceedings.

Lastly, the teachings of the Catholic Church are utterly antagonistic to the idea of any spirit being so much at the mercy of a human being as to have to—for that is what it practically amounts to—repeatedly respond to their beck and call.

These, I think, are the main objections from the religious standpoint that the Catholic Church entertains towards Spiritualism. There are others, I believe, of a purely theological nature, but, rather too technical to be dealt with here. Most of them, including those I have already touched upon, seem to be logical and moderate, and will, I think, find favor with many who, like myself, are merely undenominational Christians.

Indeed, the Churches on the whole would seem to have acted with great restraint and to have shown surprisingly little animus against a body of people (i. e., the Spiritualists) who have been doing their best to un-

dermine faith in the Divine nature of the Gospels, and to thin the ranks of all denominational congregations.

It may not be without interest to quote the opinions of a variety of Church writers on the subject, picked from men of all denominations, and selected chiefly on account of their outspokenness, the majority of such writers being more or less guarded and reserved.

In a pamphlet called "Spiritualism" that appears in a work entitled "Lectures on the History of Religions," Vol. V. (published by the Catholic Truth Society), the Rev. R. H. Benson says: "Spiritualism, or Necromancy, or the dealing with 'familiar' spirits, has always been regarded by the other great world religions as a bastard, rather than a competitor with a dignity comparable with their own." And in another place in the same work he remarks, "For every man that is converted by Spiritualism to believe in the immortality of his soul, there are probably a hundred who are led by it to relinquish the beliefs and practices of Christianity." And in still a third place, "So far as Spiritualism has produced a coherent creed at all, it

directly traverses even such fundamental doctrines as that of the Incarnation." It takes little deduction from these lines to arrive at the inevitable conclusion that the late Monsignor Benson was wholly opposed to Spiritualism.

Equally emphatic is the Rev. Winfrid O. Burrows, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Leeds, who in a pamphlet entitled "The Churchman's Attitude towards the Spiritualists" (published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1900) says: "The Christian who believes in our Lord, and uses his Bible as his guide, will feel that he cannot neglect the Church of Christ for Spiritualist Meetings"; and again: "The strange freaks of the Spiritualists seem, with rare exceptions, to have no moral meaning, and to be mere marvels intended to rouse curiosity and attract attention. Such displays as these our Lord always refused to work." And still again—"It (Spiritualism) has no message of hope. It contains no word about repentance or conversion, regeneration, or renewal. It leaves the victim of carnal passions without hope, except after 'ashes of remorse.'" Quoting from a letter he re-

ceived from the Rev. J. R. Illingworth, Mr. Burrows writes: "It is called Spiritualism, but it is in fact materialism—an attempt to return to what St. Paul calls carnal, and keeps us back, if anything, from securing true union with our blessed dead, by really spiritual means, viz., complete life in God."

Written rather long ago, but still fully applicable to these times, for neither Spiritualism nor the Churches' attitude towards it have changed to any very appreciable extent, is a pamphlet called "Spiritualism. Tested by Scripture," written by the Rev. A. R. Fausset, M.A., in 1885, and published by the Church of England Book Society. In it the author says: "Since Spiritualism opposes many of the fundamental doctrines of the written Word of God, it cannot be from God"; and further on, "It is contrary to all probability that holy angels would stoop from Heaven to such low, trivial and even blasphemous manifestations, or that saved souls with Christ should come for such calls; or the lost be allowed to leave their prison to gratify man's forbidden curiosity." And, after quoting Ecclesiastes ix. 6, in support of such views, he continues—

"The spirit manifestations can only emanate from the Prince of the powers of the air, the spirit which ruleth in the children of disobedience." On another page he remarks, "Simultaneously, the doctrine of evolution and the science of comparative religion are undermining the exclusive authority of the Bible, as the only infallible revelation from God." Elsewhere in the same work (p. 15) we read: "Consulters of the dead are sorcerers," and "sorcery and necromancy are among the foretold signs of the last days," 1 Timothy iv. 1; and again (p. 13), "Spiritualism accords with the old Babylonian pagan doctrine of seven spheres."

The same author gives the following extract from a letter sent him by a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Auckland, New Zealand. "Manifestations have often been counterfeited," the minister says, "from mercenary and other unworthy motives, but there are real manifestations," and he goes on to state, "I have abandoned the practice of holding intercourse with these unknown agencies, which I have been led to conclude are demoniacal. Besides the unreliability of the communications, I have found

them sometimes shockingly blasphemous and vulgar in the extreme. Spiritualism has excited a painful effect on even ministers known to me," and Mr. Fausset goes on to explain that in numerous cases the result of Spiritualistic dealings has been insanity.

Nor is the above case the only one I can quote of ministers who have dabbled in Spiritualism finally awaking to the fact that it is really very dangerous. *The Brooklyn Eagle* some years ago contained a report of a lecture delivered by the Rev. W. H. Clagett, President of the Board of Trustees of the Texas Presbyterian University, in the Association Hall of Brooklyn, N. Y. Dr. Clagett was once a Spiritualist, but the following extracts from his speech will show to what an extent his opinions on the subject changed, and what a revulsion of feeling he experienced in connection with it.

"I was a firm believer in it (Spiritualism)," he says, "for years, often acting as a medium in private séances. There is a deeper interest in this question than many Christians think. Spiritualism is one of the greatest powers for evil in the world." And again—"I believe there is such a thing

as communication between men and spirits. Satan, in the form of Spiritualism, offers to bring the loved one back again so that we can hear his voice and actually see his face. . . . By attacking the soul in this subtle and plausible manner it is not strange that Satan in the form of Spiritualism leads many astray." But though Dr. Clagett expresses his belief in the possibility of spirits—evil spirits—being present at séances, he also believes in the extreme probability of fraud. "To think," he observes, "of a wife or mother, even if she could communicate with us on earth, going to a woman whom she never knew and with whom she would not have associated if she had, and telling her the most sacred things—the idea is degrading and a dishonor. Spiritualism is a fraud, two-thirds of it being devil at second-hand, and the rest of it devil at first hand." These remarks of Dr. Clagett should, I think, appeal to all lovers of common sense. I, for one, am quite certain that neither my mother nor father, who have both passed over, no matter how fond of me, would ever dream of trying to deliver a message to me through the medium of a professional Spiritualist

and in the presence of complete strangers, even though these strangers were eminent members of the Psychical Research Society, out, as they profess to be, solely in the interest of science. No, if it were possible to communicate at all, I am quite sure they would communicate direct, and not through the agency of any other living person, least of all one with whom they would have had absolutely nothing in common when alive. The plea that it is only so-called mediums who possess the psychic faculties requisite for such communications is undoubtedly open to question, for it is quite certain that spirits that manifest themselves spontaneously, often do so to people having no claim whatever to these alleged special properties, and I am inclined—after many years' experience, too—to agree with Dr. Clagett that Spiritualism is a fraud, the bulk of the so-called phenomena being merely due to trickery on the part of mediums, and the rest either to some subtler, comparatively unknown natural causes, or to a spirit agency entirely different from that which it usually purports to be. The fact that the messages or visions are sometimes of an apparently celestial na-

ture is no proof whatever that their origin—supposing they really do come from the spirit world—is Divine. The fairest flower to look at not infrequently contains the deadliest poison, and drugs that smell and taste the sweetest are often the most injurious to the system. That which is the most harmful to man can assume any guise.

In a book entitled "The Powers of the Air," the author, who was once a medium, declares he once came under the control of a spirit which professed to be the Almighty and actually hoodwinked him into believing that he—the medium—was specially ordained to redeem the world. To use the author's own language: "The spirit then went on to say, 'I have chosen you to be my second Christ; I have appointed Jesus, my son, to instruct you and make you wise in all things—to do my will in the great work of man's salvation.' " The author, so he relates, continued obeying the devil's instructions, firmly believing in the Divinity it professed, until foretold events so frequently turned out in direct opposition to prophecy, and he met with such constant failure and disappoint-

ment, that his suspicions were aroused and he finally came to the conclusion that this spirit, far from being what it purported to be, was something very evil. He then struggled hard against it, and eventually—though not without desperate efforts—for when once you really attract spirit influence, it is extremely reluctant to leave you—completely banished it. Before it took its final departure, however, the author extracted from it a very remarkable confession which he narrates in detail. Here, for example, are some of the questions he put to it and its replies:

Question: "Are not the doctrines taught generally by Spiritualists denominated in the Scripture the doctrine of devils or demons?"

Answer: "Yes, they are, in very deed, the doctrines of devils or demons, because they generally reject the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Apostles and followers."

Question: "How do the inhabitants of your world mostly spend their time?"

Answer: "We spend the time, mostly, since the discovery of the mediumistic com-

munications, in developing mediums, in making psychological experiments with them and in communicating through them."

Question: "Do you not think that good spirits develop mediums, and communicate through them as well as yourselves?"

Answer: "I think not: we think we are warranted in the conclusion that no pious dead, nor the spirits of great men made perfect, nor angels, have anything to do with controlling mediums at the present day."

Further questions put to it elicited the information that evil spirits "have the power to produce lifelike images in the minds of impressible mediums," which are often misinterpreted by the latter into being actual sights of real objects—or, in other words, the controlling spirit influence makes the medium mistake the purely subjective for the objective, a mistake which, in my opinion, almost invaribly occurs.

The author goes on to explain from the information afforded him by his conquered "control" that spirits, when once invited, "have the power of using the human body, with all its organs and faculties," and can,

in addition, and with the assistance of countless other spirits, move the weightiest of tables and chairs. The author furthermore tells us that he received practical demonstrations from his "ex-control" and some of its associate spirits of their power to imitate voices, and thus trick people into believing they were actually conversing with departed friends and relatives; and he sums up all his experiences with this type of séance and controlling spirit thus: "They delight in evil as their object, and especially that branch of evil called deception. If any one thing pleases them more than any other, it is to make those in the earth life believe the most monstrous and absurd theories."

The International Bible Students' Association, which has important branches in Brooklyn, London, Melbourne, and many other large cities, published a very bitter and vindictive little booklet against Spiritualism in 1897. It is entitled "Spiritism—Proofs that it is Demonish"—and may be said to represent the views of many thousands of orthodox Christians on Spiritualism and such kindred subjects as Theosophy and Christian Science, some twenty

years ago. In this work (p. 81) we find the following extracts from a somewhat interesting article by the Rev. A. B. Simpson: "The healing of diseases is also said to follow the practices of Spiritualism and Animal Magnetism, Clairvoyancy, etc. We will not deny that while some of the manifestations of Spiritualism are undoubted frauds, there are many that are unquestionably supernatural, and are produced by forces for which physical science has no explanation. It is no use to try to meet this terrific monster of Spiritualism, in which, as Joseph Cook says, is, perhaps, the great 'if' of our immediate future in England and America, with the hasty and shallow denial of the facts, or their explanation as tricks of legerdemain. They are often undoubtedly real and superhuman. They are the revived forces of the Egyptian magicians, the Grecian oracles, the Roman haruspices, the Indian medicine men."

I have already alluded to the fact that many Spiritualists constantly refer to God as the Spirit of Love, and never seem to tire of emphasizing the fact that we should all dwell together like brothers and sisters, and love one another. The love they thus fre-

quently advocate, however, is not the love advocated in the Bible, but rather the kind of love the Bible strongly condemns. It is the love that recognizes no confines or restrictions; that is purely unconventional and takes into no account marriage laws, or the ban society has so rightly placed on unnatural friendship. It is free lance, anarchical love that, if once permitted and encouraged, would soon lead to utter social chaos, and eventually to the hopeless, wholesale destruction of the race. And there are grave signs in England to-day that this kind of love is on the increase and is no longer solely confined to one sex. Indeed, I have reason to believe there are clubs and restaurants in London at the present time, whose membership and clientele is solely confined to women, who meet there as lovers rather than friends. These women all profess to be men-haters and certainly never miss an opportunity of abusing men and doing everything they possibly can to damage their reputation and chances in life. Wives are set against and estranged from their husbands, sisters poisoned against their brothers, and I even know instances of mothers having been won

over and set against their sons. The weapons generally employed are the usual gags of the advocates of women's suffrage, i.e., the unfairness of the marriage laws and of paying men better than women for the same amount of work done, and the many alleged privileges enjoyed by men that are denied to women; to which are added various other grievances, some, no doubt, more or less real, and others wholly imaginary, but all, nevertheless, very highly colored. This anti-men campaign was most conspicuous during the Parliamentary Election of the winter of 1919, and is being pushed most emphatically all over England at the present moment. Though, no doubt, it owes its origin to some extent, at least, to jealousy and unsatisfied cravings for motherhood, as well as to other more or less natural causes, it also receives much inspiration and obtains considerable impetus from Spiritualism and Spiritualism's kindred cults—Theosophy and Christian Science.

It is a fact that cannot be got away from that a not inconsiderable percentage of women Spiritualists, Theosophists and Christian Scientists are pronounced anti-

menites. "We were told," a lady Spiritualist observed to me some months ago, "at a séance held in our club, not to have anything to do with men, that men are all beasts and tyrants, and that we must oppose them in every possible way, and try and oust them from all their present positions of power and prominence. We were further told that man's love is a very poor thing compared with woman's, and that women should only select friends and confidants from among their own sex." The lady went on to inform me that the same spirit "control" had assured both her and her clubmates that the Creator was a woman and not a male, as one had always been led to suppose from the Scriptures, and that the Divine feminine mind, which controlled everything, was strongly opposed to the male sex, which it regarded as the source of all the wrongs for which mankind in general had suffered. Now one would be inclined to regard all this lightly were it but an isolated example, but unfortunately it is not. This same doctrine of the omnipotence of the female element in the super-physical world and of its unqualified antipathy to the male sex finds

many women supporters, who are firm in their conviction that it emanates from *bonâ fide* spiritual sources and, consequently, regard it with a certain veneration.

Women mediums—who are, in my opinion, not infrequently bribed—are constantly professing to receive messages confirming it, and it is propagated not only throughout the length and breadth of England, but in America and even India. At present the damage it is doing is mainly confined to the home-life, where it separates husband from wife and splits up the family circle, and, of course, to established religion, to which its tenets are wholly opposed. It will soon, however, work far wider havoc; the population question, especially of the upper and middle classes, will be seriously affected by it, and it may actually lead to a sex war involving the wholesale and final destruction of the British, as well as other races. As I have already suggested, the doctrine of free-love, in a specific sex sense, is to no small degree closely affiliated with this doctrine of women's right to predominate, and of man's iniquities.

Let us now see what the Bible Students' Association has to say with regard to Free

Love in their booklet. Turning to page 38, we find: "The strongly marked tendency of Spiritism towards free-love-ism served to bring it into general disrepute among the pure-minded, who concluded that, if the influence of the dead was properly represented in some living advocates of Spiritism, then the social conditions beyond the vale of death must be much worse, much more impure, than they are in the present life, instead of much better, as these demon spirits claim. It denies the Atonement and the Lordship of Christ, while it claims that He was a spirit medium of low degree; and, furthermore, abundant testimony could be quoted from prominent Spiritists proving that the tendencies of Spiritism are extremely demoralizing."

With this idea of the free-love evil obviously still in mind the author of this same pamphlet goes on to quote the testimony of Mr. J. F. Whitney, Editor of the *Pathfinder* (N.Y.) and once an advocate of Spiritualism. "Now after a long and constant watchfulness," he writes (p. 29), "seeing for months and years its progress and its practical workings upon its devotees, its believers and its

mediums, we are compelled to speak our honest conviction, which is that the manifestations coming through the acknowledged mediums, who are designated as rapping, tipping, writing and entrance mediums, have a baneful influence upon believers, and create discord and confusion; that the generality of these teachings inculcate false ideas, approve of selfish individual acts, and endorse theories and principles which, when carried out, debase and make man little better than the brute. Seeing, as we have," this writer adds, "the gradual progress it makes with its believers, particularly its mediums, from lives of morality to those of sensuality and immorality, gradually and cautiously undermining the foundation of good principles, we look back with amazement to the radical change which a few months will bring about in individuals; for its tendency is to approve and endorse each individual act and character, however good or bad these acts may be." The bad influence of the mediums to which Mr. Whitney refers is, without the shadow of a doubt, chiefly relegated in the channels to which I have referred; and in the same pamphlet we read: "So bold and outspokenly

immoral did some of the prominent representatives of Spiritism become, especially the female mediums (and most of its mediums are female) that the moral sense of civilization was shocked." Also an instance is given (see p. 41) of a woman who was induced by Spiritualism to enter into such unnatural excesses that the very thought of them eventually drove her mad and she had to be confined in an asylum. "A gentleman who had occasionally attended on preaching," he says, "asked that an interview be granted his sister whom he would bring from Cleveland for the purpose. She was, he said, laboring under the delusion that she had committed the unpardonable sin and he hoped we could disabuse her mind of the thought which sometimes made her wild. We consented, and she came. She told us how she had met in California a man who had a familiar spirit and occult powers. At first disbelieving, she afterwards became his co-worker in 'mysteries' resembling witchcraft, and had finally inveigled and injured a 'dear female friend.' Since then remorse had seized her, and she had been tortured and at times frenzied, and hope had forever fled." The end, as I have

said, was lunacy, and I have no doubt whatever there are dozens of similar cases in our asylums to-day. I think a thorough analysis of Chelsea and the West End might prove the truth of this assertion, but the result of such an analysis cannot be made public, since Spiritualism has now become a fashion, and whenever an attempt is made to clean out a quagmire containing names of any special political or social note, it is instantly quashed.

I have, however, no desire to enter more deeply into this question of "free love without men" in this volume. It is sufficient for me to hint that it exists in far greater force than the average person thinks, that it finds its recruits almost solely among the ranks of the more bitter adherents of the cause of women's rights, and that Spiritualism, by aiding and abetting it, is helping to bring about what will—unless soon checked—prove to be the biggest calamity that has ever befallen the world—far bigger, even, than the late Great War.

As I think I have now produced sufficient evidence to show how strongly not only one but all orthodox Christian denominations are opposed to Spiritualism and everything

that is akin to it, I will conclude with a few very brief extracts from the long correspondence on the subject in the *Sunday Times* of 1917. In the issue of that paper for 16th September, Mr. Alfred Bruce Douglas writes:

"As a Catholic I am forbidden to take part in a Spiritual séance under pain of mortal sin, nor have I the least temptation to do so. But before I became a Catholic I occasionally dabbled in Spiritualism, and my own experiences were quite enough to convince me that the phenomena are sometimes perfectly genuine and perfectly unaccountable except on a supernatural basis. . . . The phenomena of Spiritualism are, the Church teaches, produced by devils and evil spirits. Their object is to betray and deceive the human race. Continued indulgence in Spiritualism leads to madness, folly and despair, and loss of real faith."

Again, in a letter to the same paper, published 2nd September, 1917, Mr. Samuel George says:

"I began as a would-be believer in Spiritualism. I am now an unbeliever because I know both sides. . . . The psychists complain about the bad doctrines of the Churches and despise those who adopt them. They justify their own existence as psychists as a result of this defect, yet at the same time provide for mental consumption worse doctrines than the Churches teach."

And, lastly, in a letter published in the same paper on 23rd September, 1917, M. J. L. Bissley, a member of the Church of England and a Catholic, says:

"Spiritualism is a culture which it is folly to deny, but a greater one to cultivate. It has never yet saved a soul; it has ruined many, as it is meant to do."

The words of this gentleman are tantamount to saying Spiritualism is a vice. He is correct. Spiritualism is a vice, a vice that begets countless other vices, and as such it should be stamped out, and stamped out quickly.

CHAPTER V

THE PHENOMENAL SIDE OF SPIRITUALISM AND ITS EFFECT ON THE HEALTH

I HAVE now come to what may, perhaps, be more correctly termed the phenomenal side of Spiritualism, though it is, as I have said before, so closely interwoven with the doctrinal branch that it is almost impossible to disassociate the one from the other.

At most Spiritualistic gatherings, where anything in the nature of doctrine is preached, phenomena of some description or other are also called into requisition.

If one wishes for a practical demonstration of the effect of Spiritualism on health, one need not go far afield; one has only to attend a Spiritualistic meeting, or séance, or even partake of afternoon tea at any Spiritualistic club, and one sees abundant evidence of it. The devotees of Spiritualism are almost universally people of the same type—men and women—mostly the latter—with pale, rest-

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less eyes and ill-balanced faces. Here and there one sees a massive and seemingly well-proportioned head, but there is usually some tell-tale characteristic—either a wild, far-away look in the eyes, or an expression of childish credulity and simplicity spread over the whole countenance, but particularly noticeable in the mouth.

Most Spiritualists are elderly, and not a few in their dotage, for Spiritualism is a cult that, saving in the case of the abnormal and weak-minded, rarely appeals to youth. I think, too, one would not be far wrong in saying that no small percentage of its devotees are epileptics. Here and there, it is true, at a Spiritualistic gathering, one comes across more or less normal types, but these, it will be found, are generally either strangers who have gone there out of mere curiosity; or women who are there to make use of other women, either for political or merely vicious purposes, sometimes for both; or harpies, in the now fashionable guise of professional psychics, and these you can generally tell by the watchful expression in their hard, mean eyes, their smug smiles, and their general air of shrewd observation and furtiveness.

The people in this assembly whose whole appearance and atmosphere strike you as being furthest removed from the spirit of the real Christ and His saints, are, in all probability, those self-designated, professional psychists, who proclaim that they are conversant with denizens of the highest spiritual planes; and as for the rest—the neurotics and anæmics, who drink in so eagerly every word of the grandiloquent clap-trap that falls from the lips of the lecturers or speakers, and who watch so greedily for any kind of psychical phenomena however trivial and absurd—one has only to exchange a few words with them to perceive how thoroughly unstable and unbalanced their minds have become. They attribute everything—even the most trifling details of their daily lives—to spirit influence, and see, in the most natural and commonplace happenings, the work of some mysterious visitor from the super-physical world.

I know of one old gentleman, for example, a confirmed Spiritualist, who never puts on his hat, or eats a crumb of bread without asking permission of his spirit guide, and a correspondent wrote to me from Birmingham

to the effect that he had been suffering lately from excessive constipation through a band of spirits (whom he named individually) never permitting him to take any remedy or obtain relief.

There is also amongst my acquaintances a confirmed Spiritualist and Theosophist in London, who can never converse with you for long without saying: "It must be so, because the White Order have testified to it." The White Order, I learned on inquiry, is the source of certain revelations made periodically to the old gentleman by a notorious medium, who declares that he frequently visits the angels in the highest celestial spheres and is by them initiated into the future happenings on this earth.

Spiritualism acts on some people like a drug—it intoxicates them. The more they taste of it, the more they want, until they eventually arrive at such a pitch that they feel they cannot possibly do without it. They are either always being told something by spirit voices, or automatic writing, or raps; or else they are continually fancying they see angels (the angel craze has very much increased since the war, and it no doubt re-

ceived an additional impetus from the episode known as "The Angel of Mons").

Of course, it is the excitement of the séance that produces this intoxication. The type of neurotic I have specified has always, perhaps, craved for excitement and sensation (both are recognized symptoms of his malady), and he finds these cravings best provided for in the menu of the Spiritualists. He goes to a séance where he sits in semi-darkness, momentarily expecting something to happen, and this state of chronic expectancy is like nectar to him. When he gets home he tries a little table-turning or crystal-gazing in his bedroom, and then, after a fitful night's sleep, in which his dreams are well garnished with visions of angels, spirits of the dead, creaking tables and flying tambourines, he awakens, all hurry for the day to pass quickly and for it to be time again for him to attend another séance. In the end he becomes a constant attendant at such proceedings and clings to them for just as long as his fast-decaying mentality will permit him. The kind of excitement one gets at séance is, moreover, not only bad for the mind, but it affects other organs as well; from the con-

stant straining of the ears to catch the sound of creakings, taps and spirit voices, those organs gradually become impaired, whilst the sight suffers equally through the strain of trying to make out spirit forms and ordinary material objects in the whole or semi-darkness.

Excitement, too, of any sort, is bad for the heart, and the constant thrills one gets upon hearing even the most usual noises—for darkness apparently intensifies sound—can only have the most weakening and injurious effect—an effect that might very well be fatal in the case of any one suffering from actual heart disease. Besides, unnatural excitement of this description often encourages, if it does not actually produce, either locomotor ataxia or cerebral paralysis.

Also, I have heard that the excitement occasioned by seeing a table suddenly rise and tilt has brought on fits—apoplectic as well as epileptic.

But one of the commonest results of continually going to séances, and constantly consulting so-called professional psychists—no matter what their *modus operandi,* or whether their alleged spirit communications be celestial or otherwise—is insanity. I

myself have come across many people who have succumbed to the craze for attending séances, and have eventually gone mad.

One case, for instance, was recorded in the daily papers not so very long ago, and will, I dare say, be recalled by those who happen to have read it.

A young lady, well known in society, was induced to become a Spiritualist through the prospects held out to her of being able to penetrate into the deepest mysteries—or, in Spiritualistic parlance, get initiated into the innermost secrets concerning another life. She consulted mediums and attended séances, and, in the end, fancied she heard spirit voices continually telling her to join her friends and affinity on the other side. At last, unable to bear the strain of hearing these incessant voices any longer, she went to stay in the country, and, in the gray hours of the morning, the time when she had been led to believe her spirit friends were appealing most strongly for her advent amongst them, she committed suicide.

Another case of a victim who was well known to me—at least by repute—is that of a man, the son of a Northamptonshire vicar,

who was intimately acquainted with certain of my oldest friends. Falling under the spell of Spiritualism he, too, soon became convinced that spirit voices, which he had first heard at séances, followed him everywhere, and kept on appealing to him to take the plunge and see what it was like behind the veil. Consequently, one evening, when he was having supper with my friends, he suddenly sprang up, and, declaring that he could hear the voices whispering in his ears and telling him he was wanted—wanted badly—he hastened out of the room, into the darkness of the night. The following morning he was found on the railway line—run over, and there is little doubt that, obeying the injunctions of the real or imaginary spirit voices, he had placed himself there for that purpose. Anyhow, a verdict of suicide whilst in a state of unsound mind was returned.

I can also quote, from personal knowledge, a third case, i.e., that of a retired army officer who, from continually attending table-tilting séances presided over by professional mediums, took to hearing rappings in his own house. They came to him at all hours, but most frequently in the night, until he was sel-

dom free from them, and, consequently, had a very severe nervous breakdown. However, acting on his doctor's advice, he gave up Spiritualism, and was eventually restored to health.

From these examples I conclude that no person who has made a habit of continually attending séances for any length of time can hope to escape from all the ill effects to which they have thereby subjected their mind and body, and if they do not in the end become absolutely demented, they certainly degenerate and become very far from either sound or normal. Hitherto, whenever this question of Spiritualism causing insanity has been dealt with, it has at once been suggested that, in all probability, those Spiritualists who have gone mad would have done so in any case—that is to say, they would have gone mad, had they never heard of a séance or seen a medium. Very possibly, but, on the other hand, there is no doubt whatever that Spiritualism has precipitated their insanity; and if the spirits that demonstrate themselves at séances and private sittings come from the high and celestial planes they profess to come from, how is it that they

have such an injurious effect on the mind? If they really are angels, or the spirits of good people, would they not invariably exercise a soothing and healing effect on the brain, instead of irritating and inflaming it?

No, Spiritualists cannot get away from the fact that, despite all their boasted intimacy —which generally amounts to revolting familiarity—with angels and spirits of the dead—entities which, when of flesh and blood, possessed quite out of the ordinary intelligence and moral qualities, and were only too anxious to do anything that would benefit mankind—no information that has in the slightest degree aided medical research has been obtained.

Furthermore, Spiritualism can point to no really authenticated case of malignant disease being cured through mediumship, or to any one who could be pronounced by a quite impartial medical man to be the better in health for his constant attendance at séances, and his habit of imbibing Spiritualistic literature. It seems to me to make little material difference to my argument that Spiritualism induces insanity, whether the people that have become insane through attending séances

were naturally weak-minded or not. In either case the spirit influence at séances is thus proved to be the reverse of beneficial, and any attempt to camouflage these spirits under the guise of angels or equally well-disposed super-physical entities is useless. It will be argued, of course, that the enrollment of such men as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the ranks of Spiritualists must, at any rate, modify my destructive criticism. I do not think so. On the contrary, I rather think it strengthens it.

Both Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. C. Doyle are geniuses in their legitimate callings, and with regard to genius I cannot do better than suggest that the reader should refer to an article by Mr. James Sully, author of "The Human Mind" and "Illusions," that appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*, June, 1885. The following extracts from it may, however, serve to illustrate my purpose:

(1) "Genius must be looked upon as the most signal and impressive manifestation of that tendency of Nature to variation and individuation in her organic formations which modern science is compelled to retain among its unexplained facts."

(2) "Our conclusion is that the possession of genius

carries with it special liabilities to the action of the disintegrating forces which environ us all. It involves a state of delicate equipoise, of unstable equilibrium, in the psycho-physical organization. Paradoxical as it may seem, one may venture to affirm that great original power of mind is incompatible with nice adjustment to surroundings, and so with perfect well-being."

From these two quotations I think there can be little doubt that in the author's opinion geniuses are always more or less abnormals, and, being such, have a natural fascination for abnormal subjects. Hence, it is not at all strange to find both Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. C. Doyle have become infatuated with Spiritualism.

But to revert to the injurious effect Spiritualism has on health. I think I cannot do better in support of this theory than to quote the views and opinions of certain people—chiefly medicals—who are specially qualified to speak on the subject.

I will, then, refer first of all to John M. Maccormac, M.D., L.R.C.P., and S.Ed., Physician to the Victoria Hospital for diseases of the nervous system, Belfast, who, in a work entitled "Abnormal Ideas and Nervous Super-excitability" (published by William

Mullan & Sons, Belfast, 1899) says on page 19: "The next point for our consideration is that which relates to the troubles of the nervous system which arise from or are associated with the teaching of mysticism." On page 20 he gives the following definition of mysticism: "The common character of the chief aspects of mysticism is an immense longing for happiness, coupled with a profound contempt for sensuous things. Regarding the joys of this world as ever-changing and inseparable from pain, the mystic seeks to realize at once the joys of an eternal bliss," and this definition will be seen to apply very accurately to a large class of Spiritualists at all events, who, scorning the attractions offered by the inhabitants and scenery of this world, seek to obtain immediate entrance to, or intercourse with, the so-called highest spiritual planes through the instrumentality of a medium or personal experiments with crystals, etc.

Dr. Maccormac goes on to define the two classes into which he divides mystics, the one—that of the people who "despise the body with all its wondrous organisms and capabilities, that they may seek to attain to

a mysterious union with or absorption into some divine essence," and the other, those who "yield themselves to a certain elevation of the spirit, supposed to be the outcome of some direct spiritual manifestation." In both cases, as he points out, the results of such beliefs and practices are equally injurious to the nervous system.

Dr. Maccormac's booklet is quite short, only thirty-one pages, but it would be well worth the while of any one who is contemplating taking up spiritualism to read it, before embarking on such an extremely perilous undertaking.

In another work, entitled "Types of Insanity: an Illustrated Guide in the Physical Diagnosis of Mental Disease," by Allan McLane Hamilton, M.D., one of the consulting physicians to the Insane Asylums of New York City, and the Hudson River State Hospital for the Insane, etc. (published by William Wood & Co., New York, 1883), the author describes many interesting cases of insane people who labor under the delusion they hear and see things, or in other words are perpetually clairaudient and clairvoyant.

For example, opposite Plate V. and under

the heading of "Subacute Mania," we have "E. E., aged twenty-eight, duration of insanity six years, auditory hallucinations. She has communications with divine personages and delusions of grandeur." (Compare this with the claims made by certain Spiritualists to hear angels' voices and to be on talking terms with the spirits of such eminents as Milton, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, etc.)

Again, opposite Plate III. and under heading of "Melancholia Attonita," we have "C. C., aged thirty-seven, auditory hallucinations. She hears voices commanding her not to eat." (Compare with certain of the alleged spirit commands of a similar nature, to which I have already referred.) Again, opposite Plate VII. and under heading of "Dementia," we read "A. W., aged forty-four. She has had visual hallucinations, and has heard voices which told her to destroy herself." (Compare with some of the cases of suicide I have quoted as coming within my own cognizance.) The author does not say any of the trio were Spiritualists or lost their reason through attending séances, but it is a significant fact that the hallucinations of

which they were the victims tally exactly with certain of the phenomena Spiritualists claim as hailing from the spirit world.

That my remarks are based on a very solid foundation will, I think, appear perfectly evident when I quote the views of Thomas Massie, M.B., as expressed in a letter published by the *Sunday Times*, 9th September, 1917. After stating that for twenty years he has been engaged in the task of "investigating the mental condition of some two thousand five hundred alleged lunatics," he goes on to say that from such people he has heard many statements assuring him of the presence of spirit forms, such as were described by a lady, styling herself "an investigator of Spiritualism," and claiming to possess the powers both of clairvoyance and clairaudience, in the *Sunday Times* for 2nd September, 1917. "I have never had," he continues, "any hesitation in certifying such persons as fit for asylum treatment. Neither the Superintendent of the Asylums nor the Commissioners on Lunacy have ever questioned my certificates, and in my experience the justices have never had any hesitation in signing reception orders for such persons."

Dr. Massie received substantial corroboration of what he wrote in a letter published in the *Sunday Times* on 30th September, 1917, in which the correspondent, Mr. G. Stuart Ogilvie, said: "Mr. Massie deals with the evidence very effectively, and as a county magistrate with over a quarter of a century's experience in certifying patients for our public lunatic asylums, I can endorse the truth of every word this professional gentleman writes." He goes on to remark further on in the same letter, "The basic facts remain that Spiritualism is as old as humanity, and that credulity is the converse of faith. The effect upon the weak-minded and the neuropathetic—especially in times of great mental and physical strain—has invariably been the same in all periods. The cult revives, impostors flourish, insanity increases, and the sum-total of the national will-power is, *pro tanto,* decreased."

Still another medical opinion taken from the same source. In a letter published in the *Sunday Times* on 4th November, 1917, L. A. Weatherby, M.D., wrote: "Can Sir Oliver Lodge or any one who declares that conversations have taken place between the dead and

themselves inform me of a single instance in which any real and important communications have been made? . . . Has, in fact, any single instance of some important information ever been made from that other world?" And continuing, he observes, "Have these believers in Spiritualistic manifestations ever visited institutions for the insane, and watched those afflicted with hallucinations of hearing and sight, heard their remarkable conversation with these unseen speakers, and noticed the effect some of these insane sense deceptions have given rise to?"

I will now quote from a work entitled "On Unsoundness of Mind in its Legal and Medical Considerations," written by J. W. Hume Williams, of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law (published in 1890 by William Clowes & Sons, Fleet Street, London). On page 56, for example, the author observes—"A phase of mental disturbance, as evinced in public credulity, has within the last thirty years become more particularly developed. 'Spiritualism' has had crowds of converts; professors of its art and mystery thriving on the ignorant susceptibilities of the multitude, to the great disquiet of weak-minded be-

lievers in the supernatural. The action and reaction of psychic force evoking nervous sympathies in excitable temperaments, has, in many, produced hysterical cataleptic results, appreciable by the physician, but to the uninformed full of mystery."

The hysterical condition thus brought about is then, according to Mr. Hume, the true explanation of the majority, at least, of so-called Spiritualistic trances. Far from being under the control of any exterior spirit force the trance medium is merely the victim of abnormal condition of the mind, a condition into which she has unconsciously worked herself.

This type of mediumship is, in fact, wholly self-induced, wholly dependent on a supreme straining and irritation of the entire nervous system, which results in a temporary complete suspension of the locomotor faculties. I refer, of course, only to the mediumship in connection with which there is no deliberate fraud on the part of the medium, who, when honest, no doubt does think she is handing over her body to the control of some attending spirit. Mr. Hume obviously agrees with me that the generality of people attracted by

Spiritualism are either abnormal or weak-minded, or that they eventually become so, once having adopted that cult.

A point that is made much of by Spiritualists in dealing with this question of trance mediumship is that of the alleged talking in strange voices and unknown tongues. "It's all very well," they exclaim, "for Mr. Hume to try to explain trances by declaring them to be the result of hysterical catalepsy; but how could he or any one else possibly account for a trance in which the subject suddenly begins to talk in a very different voice from his natural voice, and often in a language that we are certain is unknown to him when he is not under control? How can you explain this, saving by some outside spirit influence?" Well, I believe there is the possibility of obsession, i.e., of some contaminating spirit influence getting temporary control over people and utilizing them for evil purposes. I think that such a phenomenon might happen, but that it is very exceptional, simply because I do not believe present-day mediums are in possession of such secrets as were, in all probability, known to the necromancers and witches of olden times. I believe most of

the so-called spirit trances of to-day are either wholly fakes, or else can be explained by some such natural causes as Mr. Hume suggests. It must be remembered that most of the people who visit mediums are not altogether normal or well-balanced (because, as I have already said, mysticism has peculiar attractions for such people), and that they go to séances with minds so prejudiced in favor of believing, and anxious to believe, that it has only to be suggested to them that the voices they hear are those of their dead friends, when they will at once fall in with the idea and actually identify the voices. Some one suggests, too, that the medium is speaking in some foreign tongue—a tongue that is declared to be quite unknown to the medium when the latter is not under control (though no one is in a position to vouch for the truth of this but the medium herself), and those present will at once concur and declare the language to be Arabic, Chinese, or what not, there being no one at hand sufficiently expert (or bold enough) to refute their statement. It also happens sometimes, I believe, that the medium, having worked herself into a cataleptic condition, is quite silent, but is

by those present declared still to be speaking. Indeed, there is no limit to the part suggestion and imagination play on such occasions, as any one who has been present at a table-turning séance and heard the very slight creaks at once exaggerated into "loud raps" will know.

In a book I have before me, and which is entitled "Text Book on Mental Diseases,"[1] the author, Theodore H. Kellog, A.M., M.D., late medical superintendent of Willard State Hospital and former physican-in-chief of New York City Asylum for the Insane, writes at great length on hallucinations, both auditory and visual, and although he does not actually allude to them in connection with Spiritualism, I cannot help remarking upon the very great similarity between the phenomena he attributes to patients, suffering from mental aberration, and the phenomena claimed by Spiritualists.

Let me quote a few extracts from his work by way of illustration. On page 154 we find these lines:

"Auditory hallucinations may simulate the voices of

[1] Published in London, 1897, by J. and A. Churchill.

friends of strangers, and they may speak in foreign tongues, and may also issue from animate and inanimate things, and represent every conceivable sound known to the patient, or even new strange combinations of sounds";

and such observations will appear all the more significant, if one recalls the many occasions upon which Spiritualists at a séance declare they hear voices, and the voices are heard by no one else. In the case of spontaneous spirit appearances in haunted houses, I believe the phenomena, whether auditory or visual, are frequently witnessed by a number of people assembled together (though, in some cases, it is true, they are witnessed only by individuals separately); whereas the phenomena alleged to be seen or heard at séances are usually experienced only by the medium, or, at the most, by one or two of the sitters, and those who see the same phenomenon seldom give the same description of it. Many times I have heard, at a séance, one person declare that he heard rappings, or spirit voices, or that he saw blue lights, when no one else could hear or see anything; and, on remonstrating, I have been told that I was not psychic. This has amused me vastly,

since I have had more corroborated experiences with spontaneous phenomena in houses well known to be haunted than most people.

But to continue. Let us see what Dr. Kellog has to say with regard to suggestion, which, as I have stated, figures so largely at all séances.

"Sensitive hallucinatory patients," he observes, "are influenced by their reading and by conversation, and it is possible in this way to have hallucinations by direct suggestion."

Now it is direct suggestion, I believe—when there is no actual fraud—that certain people are persuaded at séances that they see and hear phenomena. The medium professes to see some luminous figure (or figures, for she usually sees dozens of them) hovering behind some one's chair, and immediately one or other of the sitters cries out that they see a flame, or a hand, or an ethereal something. At the same time they exhibit none of the terror one would naturally expect them to experience, were they really confronted by a genuine phantasm.

Let us now revert to what Dr. Kellog has to say further on the subject of visual hal-

lucinations, and apply his remarks to such phenomena as those Spiritualists who call themselves clairvoyants claim to experience at Spiritualistic meetings in alleged trances and in crystals.

"Visual hallucinations," he states, "may have definite or indefinite proportions; they may seem as on a flat surface or solid and rounded; they may have changing or fixed outlines, and advance or recede, or move across the field of vision; they may be colorless or have various prismatic tints; they may be larger or smaller than life; they may be single or multiple; and they may even be of panoramic character."

In short, they may cover an immense range, and embrace every kind of object or scene that Spiritualists declare are purely spiritual. Those suffering from medically attested hallucinations are just as emphatically sure that they actually see the celestial visions they think they see, as are Spiritualists, the only difference being that the latter superciliously claim their visions to be the result of the so-called psychic faculty, whereas the latter—the certified lunatics—do not claim anything of the kind, but regard them naturally, without any conceit or affection whatsoever. Dr. Kellog's remarks are singularly applicable

to the spirit faces, stated to be seen at séances where materialization is alleged to take place, though it must be borne in mind that these faces have not infrequently been proved to be a fake on the part of the medium or an accomplice.

"The mask-like hallucination," Dr. Kellog says (p. 157), "is very real and leads patients to believe that their acquaintances change their features frequently." How often have trance mediums been declared to have had their countenances suddenly metamorphosed into the faces of those whose messages they profess to deliver.

Let us go on to see what further Dr. Kellog has to say with regard to the same subject. On page 157 we read, "Visual hallucinations are common in the acute stages of mental disorder, and in general paresis, and they are more frequent during the vital reduction of the night season than in the daytime."

It will be noticed that most séances are held in the dark, and that darkness is declared by Spiritualists—particularly mediums—to be essential for spirit materialization (this, by the way, is not at all the case with spontane-

ous ghostly phenomena in haunted houses, which can manifest themselves at all times). Darkness, according to Dr. Kellog and other medical experts, also specially favors visual hallucination, so that I think we can safely assume that many of the so-called spirit phenomena declared to be seen at séances are, in reality, nothing more nor less than visual hallucinations experienced by people with some rapidly developing mental or physical defect. For instance, Dr. Kellog informs us (p. 157) that visual hallucinations are not uncommon in eye diseases. Might it not, therefore, be perfectly feasible that a certain percentage of those people who see these so-called spirit manifestations, to order, have some peculiar optical deficiency or disease, such as is frequently to be met with in people who are quite out of the normal—and it is these abnormal persons, I repeat, whom Spiritualism particularly attracts and caters for. Another form of visual hallucination, this brain specialist tells us (p. 157), is "the aura of the epileptic." Epileptics see auras, so do other people who claim to be clairvoyants—no one else does. Now as I have previously remarked—a statement that I fancy

there would be little difficulty in corroborating—people attending séances have not infrequently been seized with epileptic fits, so that the excitement of anticipating phenomena either generated epilepsy, or else the victims had been subject to the seizures previously; in either case, there can be no question that the effect of attendance at such exhibitions was very injurious, which would hardly be the case if the spirits alleged to be present were good ones.

One more reference to Dr. Kellog, and then I will pass on to some other authority. On page 173 (I quote from the same work), he says, "Hysterical and hypochondriacal patients indulge in fantastic reveries, and paranoiacs have a sort of a dream-life for months together, and the outcome in chronic mania is a steady play of fantasy, and the senile dement reverts to childish action of fantasy." Let us compare this with the statements of psychics, who tell us that they have often visited the highest spiritual planes and wandered through lovely, sunny meadows in company with angels, and that they have been shown panoramic views of such dazzling beauty and radiance as no mortal

eyes ever looked upon before. Such vauntings are very common, and are usually found to emanate from the older ranks of Spiritualists—people almost, if not quite, in their dotage. We may, therefore, put two and two together.

Another work I have at hand is one by Bernard Hart, M.D. (London), entitled "The Psychology of Insanity," and published by the Cambridge University Press, 1912.

In this work Dr. Hart makes some very interesting remarks on the subject of automatic writing, to which many Spiritualists —especially those who are also members of the Psychical Research Society—attach so much importance.

Now I am quite ready to believe that certain of the communications one does receive in writing of this description are due to spirit agency, but I think when that happens the writing comes to us more or less spontaneously; I do not consider it at all probable that it can be forced, or made to respond to the invitation of people who are out purely for sordid motives, as is the case with professional mediums. I think that when one

sits constantly and forces the mind into that state of blank Spiritualists deem necessary in order to obtain results, one renders oneself liable to at least two very serious dangers. First of all, there is the off-chance of some genuine inhabitant of a very undesirable spirit world coming along and obtaining an influence over us, that would certainly not be to our moral advantage; and, secondly, there is the extreme probability of our minds gradually becoming weaker, and our whole health suffering in consequence.

To such of us who are in full possession of our mental and bodily vigor such constant practices would be distinctly injurious, but to those of us who are naturally of rather weak intellect, hysterical, or in any way abnormal, the gravest results might readily ensue. Let us now see what Dr. Hart has to say on this subject.

In "The Psychology of Insanity" (p. 43), we find, "Let us take for example the phenomenon of automatic writing. This curious condition, although occasionally exhibited by comparatively normal people, attains its most perfect development in the form of mental disorder known as hysteria." Dr. Hart goes

on to say that "if we engage an hysterical patient in conversation, and while his mind is apparently wholly occupied talking to us, slip a pencil into his hand, he will, if some third person begins to whisper questions in his ear, write answers to them, being at the same time totally ignorant of what his hand is doing, and of the events he is describing." Occasionally, Dr. Hart says, these events narrate past episodes in the patient's life, which he has long forgotten. Here, then, is surely a quite feasible explanation for people suddenly developing some alleged new faculty, such as drawing, painting, or playing on the piano under assumed spirit control. A suggestion has been made, possibly in conversation or in some sound (some one has sung a certain air, or played a certain strain), or possibly the suggestion may have been conveyed in a peculiar scent, or in some atmospheric condition; at all events, it has come, and the recipient's memory is at once awakened; maybe they are taken back years, and a faculty long allowed to lie dormant is suddenly resuscitated. Such an occurrence would be all the more likely if the subject were addicted to hysteria. Dr. Hart thinks

this a positive explanation for automatic writing, at least, for on the next page (of the same work) he remarks:

"Automatic writing has played a large part in the history of Spiritualism, and has been attributed by supporters of that doctrine to the activity of some spiritual being who avails himself of the patient's hand in order to manifest to the world his desires and opinions. There is no need, however, to resort to fantastic hypotheses of this type, and the explanation of the phenomenon is comparatively simple."

He then proceeds to give a very detailed but lucid description of the mental process which brings about the phenomenon, and it is thus perfectly well accounted for on natural grounds. Before quitting this subject of hysteria, I should like to draw attention to certain statements which appear in a work (p. 538-9) entitled "Nervous and Mental Diseases," by Archibald Church, M.D., and Frederick Peterson, M.D. (published in London, 1899, by the Rebman Publishing Co., Ltd.). They are: "It (hysteria) was often at the bottom of the demoniacal 'possessions' of the Middle Ages, and furnished some of the martyrs of witchcraft and religious fanaticism.". . . "The studies of Charcot

and his students have placed hysteria upon a firm clinical basis, and enabled nearly all its manifestations to be traced to disturbances in the psychic sphere or in its substrata,"—and referring again to hysteria "Heredity plays an important part."

These statements merely confirm what I have already suggested, namely, that a certain proportion, at least, of trance mediumship and cases in which the medium actually speaks (either making use of some tongue declared by those present to be unknown to her, when in possession of her customary faculties, or when she adopts a voice at once assumed to come from another world) can be accounted for by hysteria, a theory that will be seen to be still further strengthened by the fact that so-called mediumship is often said to run in families.

Another work from which I should like to quote is that entitled, "Spiritism and Insanity," by Dr. Marcel Viollet, Physician to the Lunatic Asylums, Paris (published, 1910, by Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London).

"Spontaneous somnambulism," Dr. Viollet writes (p. 11), "is particularly easily brought on with certain neuropathic pa-

tients. Because of this these persons fill an important rôle in Spiritistic drawing-rooms where hypnotism is practiced. They become subjects in the hands of the mediums, realizing experiments analogous to those of extra-lucid somnambulists; or they reveal themselves spontaneously as writing, or speaking, or table-telling mediums." In this statement Dr. Viollet bears out my theory that hypnotism plays a far more subtle and important rôle in séances than is generally imagined. I am quite of the opinion that a very fair percentage of the phenomena credited to mediums are, in reality, due to hypnotism, to the fancies of neuropathic people who are experimented upon by mediums possessing the power to hypnotize. Dr. Viollet continuing, says, "The predisposition to neuropathic accidents, commonly called 'hysteria,' manifests itself during the séance, and the organizers of Spiritistic séances know well these attacks, so much do they fear them." (See "La Survie," by Mme. Noeggerath, Librarie Spirite, 42 Rue St. Jacques, Paris.) And again, "Further, these neuropathic persons have a particular character made up of a certain instability in

thoughts, opinions, projects, the itch of lying, and the desire, sometimes conscious but more often unconscious, of drawing attention to themselves." "In addition to these rather aggressive and militant neuropathics we have at séances," so Dr. Viollet informs us, "the 'paranoiacs' rarely consenting to drop their incognito which their pride considers a pedestal and their susceptibility a shield"; also "the feeble, armed with implicit faith, following the movement like sheep ever ready to follow their leader," and again we read (p. 12–13), "hidden in the shadows, sit the sad, the timid, the scrupulous, motionless and dumb, with morbid melancholia at their elbows, or crouching behind them, ever ready to pounce upon them. . . . Here they are, these predisposed, over whom dark-browed insanity has cast its tentacle; they are here in the rooms of Spiritism—come here to intoxicate themselves with mystery as with a poison."

These views are quite in keeping with the impressions I myself have received at séances and other Spiritualistic meetings, and, though not flattering, they appear to be, at all events, honest. Referring to the same

performances, Dr. Viollet says, "Some bring their progressive insanity, others their senile intellectual decay. (*N.B.*—I have said that Spiritualism usually attracts the old, seldom the young.) The Spiritistic idea takes quick root in this sickly soil, where delirium is crouching low, delirium which will be swayed by Spiritistic pre-occupations." He becomes even less guarded as he goes on, and speaks with a candor, which, though somewhat unconventional, is quite excusable in a foreigner, as foreigners, particularly Frenchmen, do not see the necessity of being delicate when referring to glaring evils. "Others," Dr. Viollet observes, still referring to the habitués of séances, "intoxicated by various causes, alcohol, morphine, hashish, cocaine, ether, will, through their favorite poison, have their attack of delirium, but as they are convinced Spiritists, their ravings will take their color from Spiritism, they will be hunted down and persecuted by the imaginary disincarnated."

From these extracts one can, I think, form a fairly correct idea of Dr. Viollet's opinions with regard to séances. I can only add that should any one still lack the conviction that

Dr. Viollet has sufficient grounds for these opinions, his doubts would be immediately dispelled were he to read Dr. Viollet's book.

I have now, with one exception, exhausted the quotations I intended making use of for the purpose of illustrating "The Dangers of Spiritualism" from the health point of view, but I think enough has been said to make it evident to all but the extremely partial and prejudiced, firstly, that Spiritualism, with all it comprehends, namely, continually sitting in the dark or semi-dark, in a state of nervous tension, and straining the sight, hearing, and heart almost to bursting-point —constantly trying to force on an unnatural condition of trance—peering for hours at a time into a crystal, and always fancying one is hearing spirit sounds or seeing spiritual phenomena—is not only injurious to the health of the strongest, but absolutely fatal to the health of that class of people it especially caters for, and invariably entangles in its meshes, i.e., the abnormal, epileptic, hysterical, and weak-minded; and, secondly, that the majority, at all events, of the phenomena Spiritualists declare to be due to super-physical agency can be shown by

medical men to be due chiefly to hysteria, and epilepsy, as well as to other physical and mental diseases of a similar nature.

The following quotation I have held over until now, as it makes, I think, a fitting conclusion to this chapter. It is taken from the oft-times referred to Report of Dr. G. M. Robertson, Superintendent of the Royal Asylum of Morningside, Edinburgh.

"I feel it necessary at this time, as the result of several cases that have come under my care, to utter a note of warning to those who are seeking consolation in their sorrows by practical experiments in the domain of Spiritualism. . . . I would remind inquirers into the subject that if they would meet those who are hearing messages from spirits every hour of the day, who are seeing forms, angelic and human, surrounding them, that are invisible to ordinary persons, and who are receiving other manifestations of an equally occult nature, they only require to go to a mental hospital to find them. . . . I desire to warn those who may possibly inherit a latent tending to nervous disorders to have nothing to do with practical inquiries of a Spiritualistic nature, lest they should awaken this dormant proclivity to hallucinations within their brains."

CHAPTER VI

THE DANGER OF FRAUD OF ALL KINDS AT SÉANCES

I NOW come to another danger which faces those who adopt the cult of Spiritualism and take up séances at every turn, and that is the danger of being tricked. I believe that for one medium who does at times conscientiously endeavor to get in touch with *bonâ fide* spirits of the dead, there are ninety-nine who never make such an attempt, but wholly rely on their powers of deception, in order to rake in the shekels, which is the goal of all mediumship. I will deal with the table-tilting medium first. Now I am neither a conjuror nor a scientist, so that I must regard the question purely from the view-point of the looker-on, the person possessed with the average amount, perhaps, of observation and common sense. To begin with, I have been to innumerable séances, some of them conducted by mediums, who have lately acquired considerable notoriety through the "backing" of several eminent professors of phy-

sics, and I have never yet been convinced that anything that has taken place when any of these scientific psychics have been present has in any way been due to *bonâ fide* spirit intervention. It is so easy to make a table, of the weight and dimensions of those usually used on such occasions, tilt. Try it for yourself, and you will find that a very little downward pressure with the tips of your fingers will cause the side opposite you to rise. I have frequently watched the fingers, arms, and mouth (the mouth is a very sure indicator) of mediums when they have been at the table, and I have often seen unmistakable signs there of pressure being used, a pressure which can, as a rule, be exerted with impunity, since mediums generally prefer to hold their séances in the dark, pretending that such a condition is very helpful, if not actually essential to spirit communication. Neither they nor their patrons, the Spiritualistic chemists, however, can explain why it is that spirits, when they materialize spontaneously in haunted localities, do so very frequently in broad daylight. The legs of mediums should be watched, too, for I have heard of instances, when so-called spirit

knocks have been produced by very material toes and knees. Tapping can very easily be manipulated by pressing on the table in such a manner that it gives little creaking noises that the medium knows well will at once be exaggerated by some of the sitters into taps or raps. As for the table running round the room, there is no doubt whatever that when the medium, or, perhaps, an accomplice, has once given an impetus to the table, certain of the sitters become so excited that they unconsciously assist in the movement, their exertions passing unnoticed in the general hubbub and excitement. I believe it is sometimes claimed that tables have occasionally risen right off the ground, but I have never been present at such an occasion; all the same, I have seen equally apparently inexplicable feats accomplished by professional conjurors, and believe that Mr. Nevil Maskelyne, or any other expert who is well versed in the theory of magic, could very easily account for the so-called phenomena on perfectly natural grounds.

I would here once again remark how utterly footling it is for Spiritualists to attempt to bolster up the phenomenal side of

their cause, by asserting that the demonstrations given by such and such a medium must be genuine because Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or Sir Somebody else—please note well it is nearly always a sir—no one gauges the snobbishness of the average B. P. better than these Spiritualists—guarantee that they are genuine. Why should Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir A. C. Doyle be better able to tell whether a medium tricks or not, than any ordinarily observant bank manager, butcher or bootblack? The chemical laboratory is a poor training school for the study of human nature and common or garden trickery, and the writings of and recent addresses given by Sir A. C. Doyle suggest very strongly that he has always been prejudiced in favor of Spiritualism, and extremely partial to its devotees. No, the people most capable of judging the performances of mediums are professional experts in conjuring, and absolutely unbiased men and women of the world, who have continually rubbed shoulders with all kinds and conditions, and know something about humanity when it is very subtle and plausible, and desperately anxious to make money.

To revert to the table. When the room is dark, anything of course may happen; for you can never trust any one. The temptation to make something happen—just a creak, or a tilt, or any little movement—anything to relieve the monotony, and make the pulses throb a trifle faster, is too great to be resisted, especially if there are women present. My experience points to the fact that women are far more unscrupulous in these matters than men. Now, with regard to the messages. I cannot say that anything I read in the much-advertised "Raymond" impressed me in the slightest. Indeed, it left me astonishingly cold, since from the many allusions I had heard in private and seen published in the newspapers, to what Sir Oliver Lodge was supposed to have discovered concerning another life, I had certainly been led to expect something, to say the least of it, very much more to the point.

Of course every professional medium in London knows all about Sir Oliver Lodge; they make a point of knowing the private history of all those who will, in all probability, one day visit them. That is part of their stock-in-trade, and can be very easily

accomplished. Club mates, friends, servants can always be got at in some manner or another. Clever women can ferret out anything (they make excellent detectives), so that it is not at all surprising that when Sir O. Lodge attends a table séance, messages at once come through for him and allude to something he fondly imagines is known only to his family circle. Flukes, too, go a long way. Sir Oliver is apparently immensely impressed because a medium occasionally tells him something quite true; one would like to know how many times the mediums in whom he obviously places implicit trust miss the mark altogether. We hear much of their successes but very little of their failures, and I know from my own and other people's experiences that the failures of mediums very far outnumber their so-called successes. In my opinion, when they do happen to strike a winner, it is almost invariably either by chance, or by an inference relating to some little piece of information they have succeeded in obtaining beforehand. I can see nothing in "Raymond" to convince me to the contrary, and my opinion is strengthened by the piffling nature of certain of the messages

which are scandalously attributed to a spirit of the dead. Death is a serious ordeal; there can be no doubt whatsoever on that score. No one who has ever beheld a sane person dying has seen him give way to flippancy and laughter at the moment of passing away. They have never died regarding death as a mere matter for jest, and this being so, provided there is such a thing as memory in the other world, it is more than likely that the spirit mind would have been so deeply affected by all it had gone through, that far from being hilarious, it would undoubtedly be most solemn and reflective. I can recollect no instance—and my experience, as I can very easily prove, has been a fairly large one—of any spirit that has returned spontaneously, i. e., without the intervention of a medium, ever appearing in the least degree mirthful, or inspiring any one with feelings other than of fear, awe, or veneration; nor has there ever been, in such visitations, anything to indicate that the other world is in any degree frivolous or the least bit like that described in Sir Oliver Lodge's book.

In my opinion, the future life which Sir Oliver Lodge portrays in "Raymond"—a

life of cigarettes, whiskies-and-sodas, and absurdly constituted garments—is not only an utter contradiction to that depicted in the Bible and sacred literature of all established old-world religions; it is also a complete repudiation of an idea of life beyond the grave as conveyed to us by the whole history of ghostdom. Sir Oliver Lodge attributes this description to the spirit of one who was very precious to him, but, in my opinion again, such a description could only have emanated from some mischievous, impersonating spirit that was never of our flesh and blood, or could only have owed its origin (a theory which, I think, is far more probable) to the imagination of an enterprising and quick-witted medium. Have you noticed at table séances where you are thoroughly satisfied that the medium cannot really know anything whatsoever about the sitters, that you never get anything quite distinctive, anything, for example, that might not apply equally well to every one else in the room. For example, a message comes through for "K. B.," and the medium at once asks if there is a "K. B." present, or if any one present knows or once knew a "K. B." Now the initials "K. B."

are fairly common; most of us have met, at some time or other, a Katie Brown, or some other Katie B., since there are dozens of surnames beginning with B. The medium is thus on fairly safe ground; nor do her surmises fail, for some one, perhaps more than one person present, at once claims knowledge of a K. B. who, they state, passed over some years ago. All is now, of course, comparatively plain sailing, and a message is at once tilted out of the usual non-committal order, as, for instance, "K. B." says she is very happy, and is particularly anxious no one still alive should continue to mourn for her; or "K. B." wants to warn you. (Warnings are a great stunt, they have just that air of mystery about them that is particularly fascinating. We do so like to be important—to feel that we are of so much account that we can incur some one's bitter animosity or jealousy. Life, as mediums know only too well, would not be worth living were it not for these vile yet elusive snakes in the grass who are eternally plotting our downfall.) Hence, when "K. B." announces her desire to warn, every one is at once thrilled, and the lucky individual for whom the message is intended

feels a hero or heroine, as the case may be, on the spot. "Do you know any one likely to wish you ill?" asks the medium. There is a momentary pause, and then a slow and very emphatic "yes." "A woman?" the medium continues knowingly. Again a slow "yes." (Who doesn't know a woman who wishes them ill? Most of us know a good many.) "Then," the medium says, with the most impressive air of conviction, "mark my words, it is about that woman the table wishes to warn you. Is it not so?" and to every one's unfeigned satisfaction the table tilts out "yes." The recipient then wants to know who the woman is, and the reply that comes is either, "A fair lady," or, "A middle-aged lady," or, "M. H.," or some other equally ordinary initials, but never anything very specific. "Can't you give the surname," the recipient inquires, but the table only responds with Mary or Molly. "Don't you know a Mary or Molly H.?" the medium asks, and the recipient says, "Yes, several" (for of course all of us have at one time or another met a Mary Harrison or a Molly Hill). "Then you may depend it's one of them 'K. B.' wishes to warn you against,"

the medium observes; and after a little more conversation the person for whom the messages profess to come, lets out that she or he certainly does know a Molly Hill with whom they are not on very friendly terms. "Is it Molly Hill?" the medium at once asks of the table, and the reply, of course, is "yes."

"There now," the medium exclaims triumphantly, "I knew 'K. B.' had something very important to communicate to you. I felt it all along. It was to put you on your guard against Molly Hill." Then, turning to the table, she inquires, "Is there anything further you wish to say?" and the table very conveniently tilts out "no," and some other spirit shortly afterwards declares itself to be present. And so on and on *ad infinitum*—always the same "fit-easy" type of questions and always the same fit-easy type of answers —answers that are invariably aided by information the medium manages to extract adroitly from one or other of the sitters. It is a significant fact that, despite the numbers of very clever people who have passed over, and who would, according to the Spiritualistic theory of evolution and progression, still go on endeavoring to improve

their minds, no information that has been of the slightest value to scientific or medical research has ever been obtained, either through the table or through any other mediumistic agency. All the messages so far have been either trite, vulgar, blasphemous, libelous, or silly and sentimental. Far from evolving mentally, the spirits of even the greatest of those who have passed over would appear to have hopelessly degenerated. As a matter of fact, however, I think that most of the so-called spirit messages delivered by the table are purely subjective, that is to say, they originate in the medium's own mind. Constant practice soon makes her expert in summing-up her clients from their personal appearance. Face and dress reveal many things; they are very sure givers-away.

A very few tactful and apparently quite innocent, lucky questions, answered unsuspectingly and naturally, give the medium just the amount of information she requires for a start; for the rest she trusts to chance, and to any inspiration she may obtain through covert glances at her client, and from further scraps of conversation. Moreover, the war has made people so anxious to glean tidings

of another world that they will jump at anything, however remote and trivial, that in any way suggests a possibility of the superphysical; and of this mediums are thoroughly well aware. They know they have only to weave even the barest semblance of truth into one of their messages, and their poor, half-demented clients will joyfully accept all that follows, convinced that it is of spirit origin.

Besides, as I have said before, we always hear of a medium's successes, but we are never told of his failures; and though our attention is invariably demanded whenever the hammer succeeds in hitting the nail on the head, we are left in blissful ignorance of the many times the hammer descends and misses the mark altogether. Some Spiritualists fancy they see a way out of this dilemna by suggesting that one must expect certain discrepancies in spirit messages, since there are unreliable, as well as truthful spirits, just as there are unreliable, as well as truthful people. It may be so, I admit, but I think most persons will agree that a much more feasible explanation is that there are inventive and lying mediums, and

that the untruths, far from originating in another, emanate wholly from this world.

However, no matter whether the fact is due to lying spirits or to lying mediums, by far the greater number of the messages tilted out at séances are wholly untrustworthy; and, of these, many are calculated to do a great deal of harm. Apart from the shock occasioned by an abrupt announcement that some very near relative is either seriously ill or dead, mischief of another kind is not infrequently perpetuated; for instance, the most abominable scandals are occasionally set in circulation, jealousy and suspicion is created, friendships and engagements are broken off, and wives are set against their husbands. Regarding the latter, I know that such attempts at breaking-up households have been repeatedly and deliberately made. As I have stated elsewhere, this attack on men is the latest stunt in mediumship, and, in my opinion again, it owes its origin to a very large extent to the more militant section of the Women's Rights Movement.

Finally, seeing how often séances are used for sinister purposes, how little they can ever really benefit mankind, and, on the con-

trary, what an immeasurable amount of harm they can do, I cannot conceive how any really thoughtful and rational person can recommend them to their friends, or to any one for whom they have the slightest consideration or esteem. In fact, I think we cannot censure too strongly the various eminent scientists and authors who, at the present moment, are making use of the Press as a medium for propagating their belief in such a pernicious and dangerous cult as that of Spiritualism. But to revert to the origin of the messages received through the table. I think what is often accredited to spirits (besides being accounted for by conscious or unconscious trickery) might well be due to thought-reading, suggestion, or animal magnetism; and should there, by any chance, be a *bonâ fide* spirit present, it is far more likely to belong to a mischievous or evil class of spirit—akin to the demons in the Bible—a class that has never been of our flesh and blood—than to be the spirit of any human being that has passed over. I do think it is possible that a spirit of the dead may, on some rare occasion, be present at a séance, but, I believe, when such a spirit does come,

it comes quite spontaneously, as it would in a house that is haunted, and quite irrespective of the call of any professional medium, who is, by-the-bye, far more likely to keep this type of spirit away than to attract it.

It may, perhaps, be of interest to note here what Professor Faraday had to say on the question of table-turning, which at about the time he wrote (1853), was greatly occupying the public mind. A number of explanations were then volunteered as to the phenomena, which were popularly credited with taking place, among them being electricity, magnetism, some unknown and hitherto unrecognized physical power which affects inanimate bodies, the revolution of the earth, and diabolical supernatural agency. Professor Faraday had an idea that a quasi-involuntary muscular action was the real cause of the table tilting and moving round, and he made an experiment to see if his surmises were correct. What followed is best explained by my referring to page 172 of a work entitled "Popular Errors," by John Timbs, F. S. A. (published 1880, by Crosby, Lockwood & Co., London). The following is the extract:

"For this purpose, he (Professor Faraday) provided an apparatus with index attached; it consisted of two small, flat pieces of wood held together by indiarubber springs, and separated by small rollers that allowed the pieces of wood to move freely over each other. The movement of the upper one was shown by an index that pointed to the right, or to the left, according to the direction of the motion. This little apparatus, when placed under the hands of a practiced table-turner, had the curious effect of paralyzing his power when he looked at the index, and thus became conscious of the real movement of his hands; but when the index was concealed from view the table began to turn as briskly as if the apparatus did not intervene. This proved that the movement of the table was effected by the direct action of the muscles exerted involuntarily. Again, Professor Faraday observes: 'The most valuable effect of this test apparatus is the corrective power it possesses over the mind of the table-turner. As soon as the index is placed before the most earnest, and they perceive—as in my presence they have always done—that it tells whether they are pressing downwards only, or obliquely, then all effects of table-turning cease, even though the parties persevere, earnestly desiring motion, till they become weary and worn out. No prompting or checking the hand is needed, the power is gone; and this only because the parties are made conscious of what they are really doing mechanically, and so are unable unwittingly to deceive themselves.'"

Of course, Professor Faraday takes a

wholly materialistic view of the subject, which is possibly a little out of date, but, at the same time, I cannot help thinking that his test might prove effectual, were it applied to the majority of tiltings and turnings of the table at present-day séances, especially those presided over by professional mediums.

In the same work we find some interesting remarks by Arago in "Meteorological Essays," to show that the same force utilized in moving tables can be imparted to other objects as well, and need have nothing to do with the super-physical. On page 173 we find Arago quoting from "The Philosophical Transactions" Mr. Ellicot's experiments upon two pendulum clocks, enclosed in separate cases, suspended from a wooden plank affixed to the same wall, and at a distance of twenty-three and a half English inches from each other. "At first only one of these two clocks was going, the second clock was at rest. After a certain time this second clock was found to have been set going by the imperceptible vibrations transmitted to its pendulum from the pendulum of the first clock through the medium of the intervening solid bodies. A very singular circumstance

is that after a certain time longer, while the pendulum of the second clock (the one which had just been at rest) vibrated in the largest arc which the construction of the clock would permit, the pendulum of the first clock, the one which at first was the only one going, had arrived at a state of entire rest." Arago's object was to show that there already existed in science instances of communication analogous to those which have been recently presented through turning tables, and of which the explanation does not require any of those mysterious influences to which recourse has been had in the case of the tables. Hence it will be seen from the testimony of another authority how probable it is that the physical is really responsible for the marvels that take place at table-turning, and how thoroughly unwise and even dangerous it is for people to place any confidence in the messages received through tables, messages which mediums and others declare come from another world.

I now pass on to the subject of professional clairvoyancy. I once went to a séance in a room within a mile or so of Piccadilly Circus. There must have been about sixty people

present, and it is no exaggeration to say that the medium, according to her statements, saw quite as many spirits as there were people. Apparently she saw one behind each chair, and she rattled off descriptions of them with as much ease and nonchalance as if she had been counting chickens, or checking off figures in an accountant's office. Surely, spirits of the dead must, of necessity, be awesome, at least such is the opinion of most people who have had the misfortune to encounter them in haunted houses—but the spirits of the dead, present on this occasion, seem to have been regarded by the medium with neither fear nor respect, for she disposed of them one after another with rather less ceremony than one disposes of old clothes.

This is the sort of thing that happened. The medium standing on the platform and pointing energetically at a rather stout gentleman sitting in the center of the second row: "I see a spirit standing behind you, sir. No, not you, but the gentleman with the red tie. The spirit is of medium height, not too fat, nor yet too thin, but just comfortable. It is of medium coloring, neither very fair,

nor yet very dark; its hair is beginning to go gray. It has a mustache, and answers to the name of George. Do you know any one of that name, sir?"

RATHER STOUT GENTLEMAN: "Dozens, and your description might suit any one of them."

MEDIUM (*rather angrily*): "Well it's one of them, sir, and he is looking at you very earnestly, as if he were anxious to tell you something."

RATHER STOUT GENTLEMAN: "Then it must be George Hammond. I believe I once borrowed half-a-crown from him and he wants to remind me of it, I suppose."

There is a slight laughter, and the medium at once points at some one else.

"The lady over there in the third row with the green ribbon on her hat. There is a very old lady standing behind you. She is resting one hand on your chair, and is eyeing you very affectionately. She is of moderate height—neither very tall nor very short. Rather pale, with gray hair. She answers to the name of Mary. Have you ever known any old lady of that name, madam?"

LADY WITH GREEN HAT: "Several. My grandmother was called Mary, and two of

my aunts also, and I have known several elderly ladies who were Marys. Can't you tell me something more definite? What is her surname?"

MEDIUM: "She says she can't say, madam, that something is calling her away, but that she will visit you again later."

LADY WITH GREEN HAT: "But her surname?"

The medium, taking no notice, turns to some one else and at once begins to describe another spirit, this time—answering to the name of William. And so the fiasco continues. Sometimes there is an emphatic denial. The person behind whom a spirit is alleged to stand declares he or she has never known any one with such a name, whereupon the medium, who is doubtless well prepared for such an emergency, at once announces that it (the spirit) is meant for some one else and has mistaken the chair.

Who can believe that such rubbish as this could possibly have anything to do with the spirit world?

And yet séances of this type are far from uncommon; you can often see them advertised. Most mediums prefer, however, to

give their clients a private sitting, for a two-fold reason. Firstly, because there is more money in it—the charges for private sittings often run into pounds; and secondly, because there is less chance of interruption. The *modus operandi* is more or less the same. Generally several spirits are seen, and their description is so vague that it is bound to fit in with some one. Moreover, the medium can always count on receiving no inconsiderable amount of help from the client. She has only to give the broad outlines of a face for her client to fill in the features. The tall, thin man in khaki, pressing a handkerchief or photo to his heart, is at once metamorphosed by the agonized young widow client into the most accurate description of her dead husband, though goodness alone knows how many other sons and husbands the same description—which became a very common stock-in-trade with the mediums during the war—has previously furnished. Spirits seen on these occasions generally have some message to give, though how it is conveyed to the medium without any one else being aware of it is one of the many mysteries connected with the business of mediumship for

business it undoubtedly is—that Spiritualists do not attempt to explain.

The kind of message the medium professes to receive is again of the "fit-easy" type, in full accordance with the description of the donor. It not infrequently takes this form:—

MEDIUM: "He (the spirit) says you are to look in the pockets of his clothes—or else in the chest of drawers, he isn't quite sure which —for a letter he received shortly before he left home."

CLIENT: "A letter! How very extraordinary! Why, I came across several. I wonder which of them he means. Was it from a lady? Ask him."

MEDIUM: "Yes, he says it is that one. He wishes you to burn it."

CLIENT: "Burn it! Why, I wonder? It was from his sister Pat, asking him to do something for her in the city."

MEDIUM: "Pat! There, that's the name he has been struggling so hard to say. I knew it began with a P, but I could not catch the letters that followed.

CLIENT: How very extraordinary! Tell him I will do as he wishes directly I get

home. Has he anything further to say?" But the spirit has gone, and the client, deeply impressed, takes her departure too, and informs all her friends what a very marvelous medium Madam So-and-So is.

The photo stunt is another of the regular stock-in-hand. All mediums, of course, know that during the war soldiers in France and at other of the Fronts were frequently having their photos taken, so that one of the safest possible messages to give is one relating to a photograph.

For example, medium to a war widow who has come with express desire to get into touch with her dead husband: "I see something forming just behind you. (Here follows vague description of khaki figure that is at once identified by desperate client.) He says he has something he very much wishes you to have."

CLIENT: "I wonder what it can be! I thought I had everything."

MEDIUM: "It is something he thinks would please you—something he had taken shortly before he passed away."

CLIENT: "Ah! I know now! It is the photograph, of course. Taken a week or so

before he was killed. I received it quite safely with the rest of his things. Please tell him so." And the poor young widow comes away fully convinced that the spirit of her dead husband has actually come to her, and that the medium is truly marvelous. She little knows that precisely the same message has been offered by that same medium to dozens of other war widows, though not always, perhaps, with the same success, and it would undoubtedly be hard to convince her that not one of the messages delivered by these clairvoyants but could be accounted for on natural grounds and in the manner I have described.

A possible solution for the phenomena professed to be seen by mediums, and which no doubt are, at times, seen by really earnest Spiritualists, who practice concentration in private, is in projection and the apparent materialization of thought forms. From my own experience and that of other people I have met, I believe it is quite possible, by intense concentration (which usually occurs when the subject is asleep or is wholly unconscious of what he is doing) to bring about a separation of the material from the imma-

terial body, and for the latter to travel considerable distances and to be seen or heard, sometimes both, either individually or collectively; but I am certain this cannot be done to order, any more than can the materialization of any thought form; so that, as far as public or private séances are concerned, I think one may rule out this solution altogether, and attribute anything the clients profess to see, either to pure hallucination, often largely aided by suggestion on the part of some one present, usually the medium or an accomplice, or to faking, which, without doubt, frequently takes place. If men such as the late F. W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney, and Frank Podmore, who had won a world-wide reputation as psychical researchers, could be hoaxed in the manner described by Mr. Douglas Blackburn in a letter to the *Sunday Times* of 16th September, 1917, how much more easily can those Spiritualists and others, who seek phenomena for the express purpose of believing in them, be deceived. No one, however eminent, is absolute proof against trickery. Robberies ere now have actually taken place under the noses of chief constables.

Now with regard to the aura medium. People may have auras or they may not; the matter is at present purely speculative. No proof one way or the other has, or, as far as I can see, can be afforded. But the moment one person declared he could see an aura, and it was ascertained that there was money in it, dozens followed suit, until aura-seers are as common now as psychometrists or table-tilters. Of course it is very easy to pretend one sees colors. One has only to be something of an actor, we can then see any color, and no one can disprove it. Only, you must never see the wrong colors. If some obviously coarse, vulgar, ignorant, flashily dressed woman comes to consult you about her aura, you must not tell her what you or any other rational and ordinarily observant person would think, you must be both psychic and subtle; the two terms, by-the-bye, would seem to be pretty well synonymous. You must half-close your eyes, and, looking at her with a dreamy, far-away expression, say, in slow and very measured tones: "I see pale blue, yellow, and orange; they are emanating from all over you"; and when she asks what they signify, you must take care to reply,

"Love, love in its highest and most mysterious sense; and intellect (always tell a woman she is clever, and she will become your client for evermore), and wisdom, not merely ordinary wisdom, but psychic wisdom—wisdom that comes from the very soul (this is sure to score heavily, because women of the type I have described are flattered beyond measure at being thought to possess soul); and power—power to fascinate, and to command attention. You might then add, "You are quite unlike any one else, you have a strong and arrestive personality," and the thing is done.

If you see an aura like this (and most aura-seers do) you are certain to succeed, and will eventually become known as one of the most famous psychists in existence; and, after all, the harm you do—if you do any harm at all, beyond ridding the wealthier classes of a little of their superfluous cash and pandering to their eternal craving for flattery—is small in comparison to the harm done by the majority of mediums in the other lines I have indicated.

I was once told how an aura-teller was somewhat neatly caught. A lady journalist

went to one, and was so pleased with what he professed to see around her that she thought she would go to him again. Now, it so happened that, just about the time, she was invited to a fancy dress ball at Chelsea, and, having had her hair cut quite close to her head, she decided to go as a boy. Before the event took place, however, the impulse seized her to try the effect of her costume first, so she put it on and went to the aura-seer in it. He obviously did not recognize her, and, greatly to her disappointment, the aura he now declared he saw differed very essentially from the one he had described on the occasion of her first visit.

Trumpet mediums are now very much in vogue, and from what I have been told, I should say they must be making an extremely good thing of it. Their fees, I believe, vary from half a sovereign to a sovereign, and even more if the sitting is private. The same sort of thing takes place at their exhibitions as happens at the table and clairvoyant séances. Spirits come, whenever the medium so wills it, and notify their presence by talking or singing through a species of trumpet. The voices sometimes sound very

hollow and mechanical, and sometimes bear a certain curious resemblance to the voices of the mediums themselves. Invariably, there are people at these séances who are only too ready to identify one or other of the voices with the voice of the dead relative, the identification being very materially aided by suggestion, either on the part of the medium or some one else present. These clients would not be quite so eager to claim acquaintance with the voices, perhaps, if they did but know that, at previous séances given by the same medium, voices exactly like them had been claimed by countless other clients.

You ask, how are the voices produced? Well, that, perhaps, is not for me to say. However, I cannot believe they are the voices they pretend to be. Can any sane person really think the spirits of their dead relatives would come at the bidding of a stranger—usually one who is none too edifying—in order, with their permission, to speak through a trumpet! If they possessed the power to return thus promiscuously—I believe they do possess the power to return at times, but only on rare occasions, when they appear to us quite spontaneously—they would as-

suredly acquaint us of their presence in a rather more dignified manner. No, if the voices proceed from spirits at all, they can only proceed from those of a very mischievous and vulgar class, that specialize in imitating the voices of their superiors, and in deceiving the poor anxious bereaved ones on this earth, who are only too ready to clutch at any straw that will bring them the comforting conviction that those who have passed away are not utterly annihilated. I do not, however, think the spirit explanation is at all feasible in this case; I think it far more probable that the voices are either produced by ventriloquism—and it is a significant fact that most trumpet mediums are of the same physical type and have the same peculiarities with regard to the development of throat and chest as professional ventriloquists—or else they are due to some mechanical contrivance, such as I have no doubt any skilled conjuror could manipulate. The messages purporting to be delivered by the spirit voices are, invariably, I believe, of the same vague and worthless nature as those "spirit" messages to which I have already alluded.

I now come to the question of automatic

writing. Here, again, although I am of the opinion that messages from a *bonâ fide* spirit world may come at times, I believe that where such is the case the spirits communicate quite spontaneously. I do not believe that any attempt on our part to attract spirits of the dead for the purpose of communication through writing, saving when they are already present, for some such specific purpose as haunting, is at all likely to succeed; although I think that if we sat long enough, pencil in hand, concentrating on some denizen of the other world coming to our side, some very undesirable type of spirit—perhaps of the nature of the demons in the Bible—might eventually accept our invitation, and that, once having come, it would be very loath to leave us. I am firmly persuaded, also, that this is the only class of spirit at all likely to respond to the invitation of professional automatic writers, who can never point to any but the most trite and worthless messages received, and whose intellectual capacities and moral characters are seldom—if ever—of an order in the least degree likely to attract the spirits of the really clever or the really good.

There are very few specimens of automatic writing that have ever impressed me as being in the least degree remarkable, or that could not be accounted for by suggestion, invention, auto-hypnotism, hysteria, or some other such natural cause. As has been already suggested in a previous chapter the human mind is very complex, and it seems to me an absolute certainty that what is known as the subconscious self is responsible for much that is at present attributed to the super-physical. Then, again, is it not more than likely that the temptation to make the hand write something, just to break the awful monotony of waiting, would be altogether too strong for most people to resist—especially if money were attached to it? Until we exhaust all possibility of natural agency playing the title-rôle in automatic writing séances, which, despite the claims to the contrary made by certain eminent Spiritualists, we certainly have not done as yet, I do not think we are at all justified in assuming that the so-called automatic writing has anything whatever to do with spirits of the dead. I am quite sure I am just as psychic as any Spiritualist, and I am equally sure certain of my relatives who

have passed away are as dear to me as any Spiritualists' relatives are dear to them, yet I have never received any communication through a professional medium from even one of those I love, indeed, from any one of the many whom I know, who are now in the other world.

It is true professional automatic writers have given me messages which they have declared came from spirit friends of mine, but since these messages have always been elastic enough to fit any one, and identified only with some such name as Dick, or Jack, or Mary, I could never see in them any proof whatever of spirit intercourse. It is disappointing that after all we have been led to expect from the alleged wonderful communications the American medium, Mrs. Piper, and various other mediums, equally well known in this country, were supposed to be receiving from the spirit of the late F. W. H. Myers, the matter somehow seems to have been allowed to drop. At all events the result was, as far as I am aware, never made known in the newspapers or any other organ that the public could easily get at. That Sir Oliver Lodge had a very great respect for Mrs. Piper's

powers is very apparent from certain statements (see p. 111) in his work "The Survival of Man." (Methuen & Co.) "Mrs. Piper's trance personality," he writes, "is undoubtedly aware of much to which she has no kind of ordinarily recognized clue, and of which in her ordinary state she knows nothing."

Despite this exalted view of her, however, and the trumpeting both she and others of her ilk, engaged in the same alleged correspondence with the dead, get from Sir Oliver Lodge, nothing seems to have come of it all, and those outside the inner circle, who are seeking information, are still left wondering.

Now it is hardly fair, and hardly probable, I think, that a matter of such vital importance as a definite proof of another life (which is what countless people would give everything they possess to receive) should be the monopoly of a select few. Yet, from the hints given in "The Survival of Man," and other utterances of Sir Oliver Lodge, one cannot but conclude that such a proof has been obtained. At the same time I have perused various accounts of the Piper, Thomp-

son, Verrall, and Holland so-called spirit communications, and, so far, looked for this proof in vain.

The sort of things that happens in these cross-correspondences is that Mrs. A. in America, for example, and Mrs. B. in England both sit down, pretty well simultaneously, to write. Mrs. A. begins a sentence, perhaps, in Latin; Mrs. B. ends it, and the sentence is declared to be a quotation that was constantly used by Mr. C., who is dead. Now as both Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. vow and declare they do not know Latin, and are totally unacquainted with any of the late Mr. C.'s pet phrases, it is concluded by the great experts in psychical research that the spirit of Mr. C. had been communicating with both these ladies.

That is, possibly, the proof we are seeking, but can any sane person accept it? Obviously the integrity of the ladies concerned has never been called into question, because Sir Oliver Lodge and certain other of the more Spiritualistic members of the S.P.R. have perfect confidence in them. But this kind of proof will never do for the man of common sense—the man in the street. He

wants some much more substantial guarantee as to the integrity of mediums than the mere opinions of a psychical life, before he satisfies himself that the knowledge displayed in their alleged cross-correspondences is derived through the agency of the dead. He wants absolute proof—proof without any loophole whatever, that the mediums engaged in the work were not in collusion, did not derive their knowledge from information obtained beforehand, or that what they wrote was not due to pure coincidence, and so far, in my opinion at least, no such proof has been forthcoming. If it had, all the world would believe, and all the world is very far from doing that.

Sir Oliver Lodge seems particularly anxious to convince his readers with regard to the psychic powers of Mrs. Verrall. In "The Survival of Man," for example, we read (p. 335), "The fame of Mrs. Piper has spread into all lands, and I should think the fame of Mrs. Verrall also. In these recent cases of automatism the Society has been singularly fortunate, for in the one we have a medium who has been under strict supervision and competent management for the

greater part of her psychical life (psychical life indeed!); and in the other we have one of the sanest and acutest (I certainly believe in the acuteness, though it is rather doubtful if the author of 'Raymond' is much of a judge on sanity) of our own investigators, fortunately endowed with some power herself —some power of acting as translator or interpreter between the psychic and the physical worlds."

We are given some idea of the nature and quality of Mrs. Verrall's power in "The Survival of Man" (see pp. 155 and 300). It is quite in keeping with the power that is responsible for the messages concerning the whiskies-and-sodas in "Raymond," and, in my opinion, just about as psychic. The remarks I recently made in connection with a certain correspondence are equally applicable to the case in hand; before Mrs. Verrall credits herself with being psychic she must eliminate all possibility of fluke and all possibility of any knowledge displayed in her alleged spirit-inspired writings being derived by her beforehand, and retained in her subconscious mind; and until she has done that she is not, in my opinion, at all justified in

claiming that she is in the remotest degree psychic. At present we have her word, I take it, that no such knowledge as that exhibited was previously acquired by her. Sir Oliver Lodge is apparently content to accept it; I am not, because the testimony of one single person is no evidence. That, I was always given to understand, was one of the maxims of the S.P.R.

In reference to these cases Mrs. Verrall may, perhaps, possess absolute integrity; on the other hand she may not. Who can judge? Obviously, no one but Mrs. Verrall herself. No one else, and least of all Sir Oliver Lodge, who, in "Raymond," as well as in "The Survival of Man," shows that where the other sex are concerned he is the very acme of credulity. I might add that my statements concerning Mrs. Verrall will apply in an equal degree to Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Holland, other mediums mentioned in the above works, and in whom also Sir Oliver Lodge would appear to place the very greatest confidence. With regard to these two works (i.e., "The Survival of Man" and "Raymond"), their whole tone, in my opinion, is one of extreme arbitrariness and

self-importance, quite in keeping with the character of Spiritualists in general.

The same spirit is, I think, displayed by Sir A. C. Doyle, when discussing the subject of Spiritualism in the *Sunday Times* (see correspondence, 1917) and *The Nation* (1919); and when one reflects that the accusation brought against the Churches by Spiritualists, more frequently than any other, is that they are autocratic and intolerant, it is not very easy to repress a smile. In my opinion a desperate attempt is now being made to firmly plant Spiritualism on the nation, and to thrust it in the place of the present State Church. I can quite well see in my mind's eye a new archbishop in the person of Sir Oliver Lodge, bishops in the persons of Sir W. F. Barrett, Sir A. C. Doyle, and, perhaps, Mr. J. A. Hill, and vicars innumerable in the persons of known and unknown mediums. A school or institute for training psychics is already in the mind, and doubtless such schools or institutes will, in time, supplant the present theological colleges. This idea of religious revolution may seem baseless and visionary, but I verily believe a colossal effort on the part of Spiritualists

will be made to bring it about, and I am quite certain, if it is accomplished, the State Spiritualistic Church (if such you could designate it) would be ten thousand times more dogmatic, arrogant, and bigoted than any State Church we have hitherto known.

But to revert again to so-called cross-correspondences. There is another point that has to be considered when dealing with them, and that is the question of identity. Supposing the communications were actually due to spirit agency, what proof have we that that agency is what it professes to be? Surely it would not be difficult for a mischievous, clever, and cunning spirit to impersonate the spirit of F. W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney, or Professor Hodgson. Being behind the scenes, so to speak, it would surely have some means of ascertaining at least one or two of the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of any one of those three gentlemen when they lived on this material plane—and who could detect the difference? No living being, because—despite all that has been proffered by mediums as information hailing from the other world—we know absolutely nothing about spirits—we cannot say of what they

are composed, or in any way define or limit their capabilities. They are, so far at all events, completely outside our ken.

Moreover, it is but feasible to suppose that some of this cross-correspondence would be due to impersonation, since such trickery would only coincide with the silly phenomena claimed by Spiritualists as taking place at table-tilting and trumpet-speaking séances. In all probability, the spirits that derive amusement from tilting tables, banging tambourines, and putting sweets in people's mouths, are only too ready, for the sake of variety, to seize the opportunity of impersonating their superiors.

Before passing on to another branch of mediumistic display, let me refer briefly to a matter of no little importance, namely, the training of psychics. It will be remembered that in speaking of Mrs. Piper I quoted certain extracts from Sir Oliver Lodge, one of which contained the words, "who has been under strict supervision and competent management." This, of course, can only mean that Mrs. Piper was undergoing a process of so-called development. Of what that process consists I neither know nor can conceive, nor

can I imagine who the competent trainers could be, since, considering the fact that the forces constituting the other world are at present wholly unknown to us, it is quite inconceivable that any one should lay claim to any competency whatever concerning them. In order to train a pupil you must have some knowledge, at all events, of the subject in which you intend training him. And who is there that can claim to be an authority on such a debatable subject as the psychic faculty? Sir Oliver Lodge cannot, nor can Sir W. F. Barrett, nor Mrs. Thompson, nor Mrs. Verrall, for, as far as I can see, they have not given the slightest proof that they possess any power whatever to get in touch or to communicate with another world, and it is that power, I take it, that the so-called psychic faculty is supposed to represent.

The training of psychics then means that an attempt is being made to develop the psychic faculty in those who are supposed to possess it, but who, in all probability, do not possess it, by people who know no more of what the super-physical embraces than do those whom they are professing to instruct. But what these self-styled professors of psy-

chism can help to develop is hysteria, and that they are doing daily. They develop hysteria in some of their pupils and unwittingly encourage trickery in others, so that the work they are doing is without doubt both injurious and demoralizing. One would like to know how many of these trained mediums have ended in becoming hopeless degenerates or confirmed tricksters. The records of mediumship will reveal much.

I now come to the question of psychometry. This, in my opinion, is almost invariably done either by pure trickery or else by mere inference from the client's personal appearance. At meetings where a number of articles are collected and put into a box, the box is quickly changed by an accomplice and an empty one substituted in its place. This can easily be done under cover of conversation—the psychometrists are generally windbags—or some sudden little noise or disturbance, just sufficient to divert the audience's attention from the box. An accomplice then communicates to the medium, generally by a code of signals made with the face, hands, feet, or tappings under the floor, or, if the medium wears a mask, by a telephone, the

wire of which can be very easily and effectually hidden from the audience, a description of the articles and any initials or other marks on them. The medium at once makes use of this information in the manner, practice has taught her, will most impress the audience. On these occasions anything, however slightly true, is sure to be proclaimed wonderful; the audience have come there wanting to believe, and are more than half convinced before the performance begins.

There is nothing that a professional psychometrist does, either at a public or a private sitting, that could not be done by any fairly competent professional conjuror, and probably done better. All that the psychometrist requires who sees her clients privately (ostensibly on the grounds that one seldom gets the right psychic conditions in public places), and thereby avoids all danger of such exposure, as once overtook the slate medium, Dr. "Slade," is a shrewd knowledge of human nature, some power to draw inferences from physiognomy, an ability to play the part of detective and acquire information by prying into and ferreting out family secrets, and an unlimited amount of assur-

ance (the two last-named requisites coming readily and naturally to many women). The rest is merely a matter of practice. Hundreds are at it, and there will be hundreds more, so long as society women continue to hunt around for novelty and sensation and their husbands are silly enough to allow them money to spend on such tomfoolery. If there were no money in psychometry, there would be no psychometrists. It is astonishing to find how much the so-called psychic faculty is regulated by the money market. Before the war, when Society spent most of its money abroad, London had comparatively few professional mediums; but as soon as the war came, and mothers and widows were ready to pay anything to get in touch with their relatives, hundreds of people suddenly found out that they were psychics, and immediately styled themselves "professional clairvoyants," "psychometrists," or "trance mediums"; black magic, too, sprang up, and may now be said to have a by no means small clientèle. At a fantastical exhibition of "black magic" in Chelsea, to which I had gone with a party of friends, after being led to expect that the

room would suddenly fill with all kinds of ethereal demons, the only thing any of us saw, in the least degree like our preconceived notion of a devil, was the magician himself. At the same time I think it quite possible that if one continually invites the intercourse of hellish spirits, offering them, so to say, a free passage and free field, one might succeed in getting in touch with them, and that—without the aid of any of those particular mystical words and symbols experimenters in the black art tell me are indispensable.

I do not propose to deal here with the different kinds of black magic now in vogue—they are all the result of this present mad craze for Spiritualism—but, I might say that from what I can gather, hypnotism and suggestion, as in Spiritualism, probably play an important rôle in most of them, whilst in a few there is unquestionably something very filthy and disgusting. Of course many of the mediums who profess to be exponents of black magic are pure fakers, and, perhaps, beyond mere trickery would stoop to nothing worse, but there are some, I am convinced, who make so-called initiation an excuse for the perpetration of acts only likely to attract

the very lowest and foulest type of spirit; and I would most solemnly warn all those, at least, who have no desire to lose money and self-respect too, to shun this subject and give it the very widest berth possible.

Spiritualism (excluding black magic, of course) numbers among its advocates scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir W. F. Barrett, Sir William Crookes, Professors Janet, Bernheim, Lombroso, Flammarion, and others. Equally clever and prominent men, however, are opposed to it, and I now intend quoting a few extracts from the writings and letters of the latter. First of all, I will refer to Sir Ray Lankester, K.C.B., F.R.S., whose writings are singularly free from any of that egotism and bumptious fanaticism that is so characteristic of the writings of Spiritualists, such as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir A. C. Doyle, and others.

In the January number of *Bedrock* (1913), Sir Ray Lankester writes, àpropos of Sir Oliver and telepathy, "Sir Oliver Lodge, when president of the Psychical Research Society, some years ago, actually went so far as to assert that the society had achieved a great result; it had, he said, 'discovered'

telepathy. We all know what the word 'discovery' means in the statement of a professional man of science. It means not that a guess or fancy has been put forward, but that the thing said to be 'discovered' has been demonstrated to exist by evidence which bears the test of strict examination as to its truth—evidence which can be produced and subjected again and again to searching criticism." Just such a test as I have suggested should be applied by the outside public to Mrs. Verrall and other of the mediums Sir Oliver Lodge and his confrères have so persistently bolstered up. "At the time I challenged," (in a letter to the Press) Sir Ray Lankester continues, "Sir Oliver Lodge's statement that telepathy had been 'discovered,' I asked for the demonstration necessary to justify the assertion that telepathy had been 'discovered.' I professed my willingness to investigate this phenomenon stated to occur in our midst and its asserted discovery. No opportunity of investigating it has ever been offered to me by those who declare that it exists. I was definitely refused the opportunity of examining the asserted phenomenon for which I applied to the So-

ciety for Psychical Research. No evidence establishing experimentally the existence of 'telepathy' has been published by Sir Oliver Lodge or by his associates." And so it is with regard to the wonderful proofs alleged to have been obtained through cross-correspondence and at the table. There has been a marvelous lot of trumpeting by the same gentleman and his associates, but when a proof has been demanded for the general public, it has been ominously withheld.

Now let us hear what the same author—a scientist every whit as eminent in his own line as Sir Oliver Lodge is in his—has to say with regard to spirit presences at séances. In the new and revised edition of "The Kingdom of Man" (Watts & Co., London, 1912), we read (p. 36), "Modern biologists (I am glad to be able to affirm) do not accept the hypothesis of 'telepathy' advocated by Sir Oliver Lodge, nor that of the intrusions of disembodied spirits pressed upon them by others of the same school. We biologists take no stock in these mysterious entities."

Next, let us refer to an article by Ivor Tuckett, M.A., M.D., entitled "The Illogical

Position of Some Psychical Researchers," also in the January, 1913, number of *Bedrock*. In a passage relating to Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Piper, Dr. Ivor Tuckett writes, "Then again, it is sometimes triumphantly asked, how do you explain certain cases of cross-correspondence or the best of Mrs. Piper's trance utterances and writings? The answer to this is that on the data supplied a normal explanation may not be possible, but that the first point to decide is whether the witnesses and reporters of the case can be regarded as competent; and that if in their other writings they have not shown a high standard of evidence, or if the will to believe is at all noticeable, then, in view of the fact that the observations cannot be repeated, an agnostic attitude is essentially scientific." The witnesses and reporters of the phenomena are, invariably, pronounced Spiritualists of the order of Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. J. A. Hill; but the mere fact that the writing might be at one time compatible with the truth and at another time not, renders it worthless, and, consequently (no matter whether it be spirits who lie or the mediums, the result is the same), since we are never sure that we can

depend on it, we cannot regard it as of any practical use whatever.

Referring to Mrs. Verrall, Dr. Tuckett observes, "On a series of automatic writings, where she records the results of three hundred and twenty-two experiments on herself, and where telepathic experiments, with the avowed object of determining whether information unknown to the writer could be conveyed by automatic writing, were practically unsuccessful. Indeed, these experiments very strongly suggest, if they do not establish, the fact that automatic writing is concerned with the reproduction of past experiences or of fabrications founded on these experiences. The conclusion, then, of this rejoinder is that no phenomena requiring a supernormal explanation, have yet been recorded under conditions sufficiently free from the possibility of error as to satisfy a scientific standard of research." Which is precisely what I have said.

Again, with regard to Sir Oliver Lodge and other of his Spiritualistic associates of the S.P.R., Dr. Tuckett remarks, "When Sir Oliver Lodge ends his article with the assertion that the S.P.R. was founded in ex-

plicit accord with Huxley's dictum about the importance of 'the resolution to take nothing for truth without clear knowledge that it is such,' he forgets to state that from the start some of its most prominent members have taken the hypotheses of 'psychic force,' 'telepathy,' and 'Spiritistic interference' for truth without any clear knowledge they are such." This substantiates my assertion that one can really place very little reliance on the testimony of men who, like Sir Oliver Lodge, enter the arena of Psychical Research entirely biased in favor of believing, who are, in fact, out to believe, in spite of any and every obstacle.

Dr. Tuckett soon dismisses Sir Oliver Lodge's shadow, Mr. J. A. Hill. After referring to certain passages (p. 80) in Mr. Hill's work, "New Evidences in Psychical Research" (a work which bears the hall-mark of Spiritualism, namely, a super-abundance of high-falutin expressions and would-be scientific terms), Dr. Tuckett proceeds: "In fact the evidence which has driven him (Mr. Hill) to believe in psychometry consists of the uncritical stories of a few friends and of his own unverified experience on one or per-

haps two occasions." And, again, "Mr. Hill, as revealed in his writings, is really rather an interesting psychological study because he clearly recognizes the need of 'careful observation and experiment, scrupulously accurate recording, and cautious inferring' ('New Evidences in Psychical Research,' p. 212. Rider, London, 1911), and at the same time shows that he has had no practical training in exercising these qualities,"—remarks that might surely be applied to all who attempt to bolster up Spiritualism and mediums.

I will now turn to an article entitled "Science and Spiritualism," by Sir Bryan Donkin, M.D., F.R.C.P., also in the January, 1913, number of *Bedrock*. In it we read, "The present writer has had considerable experience in the past of spiritualistic séances of many kinds, both public and private (in a footnote it is stated that he attended séances held by Corner (*née* F. Cook), Annie Eva Fay, Williams, Hearne, Hush, and Eglington—all well-known mediums of their time), including manifestations of 'thought transference,' and also of what is now called 'automatic writing' with and without the aid

of the ingenious instrument known as planchette; and he has found, as many others have found (myself amongst the number) that difficulty or impossibility of applying crucial tests of the occurrence of phenomena as alleged has always coincided with the existence of certain preliminary conditions postulated as necessary for the manifestations." The pretext of mediums that it is very harmful and injurious to spirits to be touched, or experimented upon in any way during the so-called materialization, is, of course, all buncombe. Spirits that manifest themselves spontaneously in haunted houses experience no harm when chairs are thrown at them, so why should those at séances. The conclusion is obvious.

But to continue the quotation from Sir Bryan's article: "Without further illustrating here from his own experience this quasi-pathological study of 'Psychics' and their prophets and disciples, or quoting the numerous cases where appropriate tests were applied and the manifestations declined or disappeared as the crucial test was approached or attained; or where the results either demonstrated or directly indicated a well-

known agency in the production of the phenomena; or where mistaken observations, or illusions, or statements and actions which were confessedly fraudulent, were revealed; he maintains, on the grounds set forth above, that science is more than fully justified in leaving the jewels of Psychical Research to be plowed by those who please." This is a pretty sure guide to what Sir Bryan really thinks on this subject.

Further on he says, "The more frequently instances of some classes of 'occult' phenomena have been confessedly proved to be due to misconception or to manifest trickery"—(this referring to the movements of pieces of furniture, materialization and tangibility of spirit-forms)—"the more such classes are neglected or ignored, essential though they were to the Spiritualistic propaganda of the not far distant past"—(many Spiritualists still believe in them)—"and the more stress is laid on other kinds of alleged phenomena"—(automatic writing, for instance)—"that have been less often actually and severally demonstrated to be due to similar origins."

Sir Bryan goes on to add that it is often announced from the pulpit (I suppose he

means the Spiritualistic pulpit) and platform that "the materialistic science" of the last century has given way to the scientific philosophy of such present-day teachers as Professor Bergson, and that the prophets of Psychical Research are now clamoring to be recognized as "scientific" students of the "super-normal." "But," Sir Bryan remarks, "those who recognize no scientific revolution, nor any victory over the accepted methods of scientific research by any philosophies whatever, regard all such attempts at reconciliation as mere logomachy, and say of such as, in the name of Science, would abrogate scientific method, 'they make a Desert, and call it Peace.'" Spiritualists would do well to ponder over this when boasting their cause is advocated by the scientific world.

Lastly, Sir Bryan issues a warning which, I think, should have special significance for all those dabbling in Spiritualism. "Much," he says, "might be said of the multiform harm resulting from the advocacy of 'Psychical Research' (in its current and peculiar sense). But, in order to avoid any possible confusion of the issue, the writer has pur-

posely omitted all reference to this from his argument."

I now come to a work by Lionel A. Weatherly, M.D., and J. N. Maskelyne. It is called "The Supernatural" (published by J. W. Arrowsmith, Bristol). On the title page confronting a dedication to Daniel Hack Tuke, M.D., we find these very appropriate lines by Dr. Maudsley: "If all visions, intuitions, and other modes of communication with the supernatural, accredited now or at any time, have been no more than phenomena of psychology—instances, that is, of sub-normal, supra-normal, or abnormal mental function—and if all existing supernatural beliefs are survivals of a state of thought befitting lower stages of human development, the continuance of such beliefs cannot be helpful, it must be hurtful to human progress."

In this work the mediumistic side of Spiritualism is summed up very neatly by Mr. J. N. Maskelyne. "The doctrine of so-called Spiritualism," he says (see p. 183), "embodies an abstract principle and a concrete fact—the principle being 'that those who have plenty of money and no brains were

made for those who have plenty of brains and no money'; and the fact is that the ranks of the Spiritualists have ever been largely recruited from these two classes."

Referring to the notorious American mediums, the Fox sisters, the same author remarks (p. 187): "Speaking of the Fox girls, the Professors of the Medical College, Buffalo, said that these loosely constructed girls got their raps by snapping their toe and knee joints." On the same page, again, is the following quotation, which refers to the confession made by Mrs. Norman Culver, a relation of the Fox family: ". . . but something I (Mrs. Culver) saw when I was visiting the girls at Rochester made me suspect they were deceiving. I resolved to satisfy myself in some way, and some time afterwards I made a proposition to Catherine to assist her in producing the manifestations. . . . After I had helped her in this way for some time, she revealed to me the secrets. The raps are produced by the toes. All the toes are used. After a week's practice with Catherine showing me how, I could produce them perfectly myself." And no doubt this is how many of the rappings are done by

mediums at table-turning séances to-day. It is significant to note that all New York State went mad over these supposed great psychics, just as London is going mad over other supposed great psychics at the present moment.

In connection with the famous medium, Daniel Douglas Hume, who, to quote Mr. Maskelyne's words (p. 189), "wound his way into the best society, always despising filthy lucre, but never refusing a diamond worth ten times the amount he would have received in cash," we are told he got involved in a law-suit by pretending to get such messages from the spirit of a dead man, as induced the latter's widow to give him thirty thousand pounds. The suit went against him—as even his confrères were forced to admit, very justly—and, like a good many mediums have done since, he fizzled out.

With regard to Miss Annie Eva Fay, another American medium who duped thousands of people in this country, Mr. Maskelyne writes, "Her séance was the most transparent trickery all through; so simple, indeed, that in a few days I taught my colleague the whole of her tricks, and he performed them

at the Egyptian Hall, whilst Miss Fay was holding séances at the Hanover Square Rooms. The result of this was that Miss Fay made a very short stay in London."

Apropos of Dr. Slade, the slate-writing medium, Mr. Maskelyne remarks, "However, from the reports of my deputies and others, the secrets were in my possession within a few weeks, and I was planning a grand exposure, when Professor Lancaster and the late Dr. Donkin caught the gentleman red-handed, and prosecuted him and his manager."

Mr. Maskelyne deals with so-called materializations, table-turning, thought-reading, and spirit photography in the same work, and what he thinks of them all he suggests in a nutshell, when referring (see p. 205) to the report of a certain commission of inquiry into these several branches of professional mediumship. "Of genuine manifestations," he writes, "they found absolutely none—not one single indication of anything that could not be accounted for by the most puerile trickery"; and with these observations we will leave him. I can only

add that the work of which he and Dr. Weatherly are the joint authors should be read by all persons who are contemplating attending a séance.

Other works that I would strongly recommend these same people should read (in addition to most of those from which I have already quoted) are Dr. Charles Mercier's "Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge," and Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert's "The Dangers of Spiritualism" (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906).

In the latter work (p. 143) we find the following: "The exercise of mediumship is almost always attended by physical exhaustion, very frequently by complete mental prostration, producing a kind of moral paralysis and inertia of the will. Sometimes there are cataleptic seizures, contortions of the muscles of the face which are terrible to witness, and which are, all of them, conditions awakening disgust in all healthy and normally constituted minds." And again (see p. 145), "Whatever the scientific explanation of these physical accompaniments may be, is it likely, considering the debasing effect they

have on most minds, that Providence would employ such ignoble and unworthy means with a view to the higher moral advancement of mankind?"

Regarding the question of identity, Mr. Raupert apparently shares my views. He says (p. 115), "The absolute futility of any attempt at identifying spirits is another discouraging or unsatisfactory circumstance. It is no proof that the spirit communicating is A. B. if he tells me of words or circumstances (supposed to be) known only to A. B. and myself. Who knows how many spirits are more or less eavesdropping in every time and place!"

A somewhat unusual view of the subject was taken by the late George Macdonald. In his work, "The Miracles of Our Lord," he says, for instance (p. 160), "There seems to me nothing unreasonable in the supposition of the existence of spirits who, having once had such bodies as ours, and having abused the privileges of embodiment, are condemned for a season to roam about bodiless, ever mourning the loss of their capacity for the only pleasure they care for, and craving after them in their imagination. Such,

either in selfish hate of those who have what they have lost, or from eagerness to come as near the possession of a corporeal form as they may, might well seek to 'enter into a man.' "

Another author from whom I will quote briefly is Mr. Edward Clodd, and the following extracts from his letter to the *Sunday Times* (7th October, 1917) will, I think, very well serve to indicate his attitude towards Spiritualism and some of those who practice it.

"The corrective to any tendency to believe in the delusion," he writes, "is supplied by a study of animistic ideas, such as is given in Tylor's 'Primitive Culture.' Therein is clearly set forth the origin and growth of early man's conception of a soul and a future life, upon which no further light has been thrown by this pretentious Spiritualism. It is only the old animism writ large." And again, "Instead of 'about it and about,' with which Spiritualists are filling your columns, why do they not urge their leaders to bring the phenomena before the Court of Science, where mere personal authority has no value, and where, on the principle of setting a con-

jurer to catch a conjurer, Mr. Devant should be subpœnæd."

Mr. F. H. Hayward (D.Lit., B.S., London) also has something interesting to say in this controversy on Spiritualism going on in the *Sunday Times,* and the following extract is from his letter to that paper, published on 14th October, 1917:

"What exactly," he asks, "has Sir Oliver Lodge discovered? What revelations have come to him through the mediums, untrustworthy or otherwise, whom he has consulted? Is the whole mass of such revelations, even if true, worth a schoolboy's consideration?" And further on: "Your readers will note the evidence of a future life would not be necessary for people who believed in the Resurrection of Jesus. Like most scientists, Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. C. Doyle evidently do not believe—or did not believe—in that, otherwise they would not have gone fishing for other proofs."

And, lastly, I refer to some remarks by Mr. Nevil Maskelyne, also made in the *Sunday Times,* but in a letter published on 28th October, 1917. Referring to the question of investigating supposed spiritual phenomena,

Mr. N. Maskelyne observes, ". . . the only people who are really competent to undertake an investigation are, necessarily, those who have a knowledge of, at least, the modern magic. Professed scientists, as a rule, have no such knowledge. I very much doubt if Sir Oliver Lodge, for example, even knows there is such a thing as the theory of magic." And he adds, "During the past thirty years I have, from time to time, been associated with my father, the late J. N. Maskelyne, in investigations concerning alleged Spiritualistic phenomena. And in all those years I have never discovered anything that even tends to lend color to the Spiritualistic hypothesis."

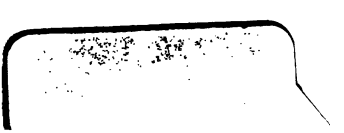
From these extracts and quotations I trust it may be gathered (since they have been given partly to show) that despite the puffing up that Spiritualism—particularly the mediumistic side of Spiritualism—is receiving at the hands of a clique of well-known scientists and authors, there is still a strong consensus of opinion, equally expert, against it. I hope I have made it quite clear, for example, that the orthodox Churches are unanimous in condemning Spiritualism on

the grounds that it is dangerous to faith and morality alike; that the medical profession, with little exception, oppose it on the grounds that it is thoroughly injurious to health; whilst many of the most eminent scientists—by far the greater number, in fact—regard it as a sham, maintaining that its phenomena are wholly explainable by natural causes, and, more often than not, by trickery. To the ordinary average man who is neither very religious nor very eminent, but who has plenty of common sense, Spiritualism can only appear as a hotch-potch of imbecility, gullibility, and roguery—a hotch-potch that has been of benefit to no one, saving those that have filled their pockets out of it. To me one of the worst results of this popular side of Spiritualism is that it has led—and still is leading—to such bitter deception and disappointment. Of the legions of widows and other bereaved ones who have been induced to visit mediums through seeing them advertised in books, magazines, and newspapers, none, perhaps, have been wholly satisfied, and the majority have come away with the ache in their heart increased rather than diminished.

It may possibly be said of me that all this is inconsistent with the views I have hitherto expressed in my writings. Let me observe that it is nothing of the kind. It is true that I have stated my implicit belief in what are termed ghosts; and in ghosts—in haunted houses, and at the time of, or immediately subsequent to, death—I have always believed and still most emphatically do believe; but these ghosts, I would remind you, are of a different nature from the type of thing we are taught to associate with the spirit world at séances. It is with regard to the latter—the latter only—that I am very, very skeptical, and I repeat once again that I do not think it at all probable that any of the psychics of to-day possess the power of evoking or getting in touch at will with spirits of the dead; though I think it just possible that they may on rare occasions and quite by chance succeed in attracting spirits of another kind.

The so-called manifestations we see and hear at séances command neither awe nor respect, but are merely treated either with vulgar familiarity or with open derision. They are a bad, very bad imitation of the

genuine visitant from another world, and they would certainly never take in any one who had ever had any experience whatever of a *bonâ fide* ghost.

Lastly, if we must have a change—must have something different in the place of our present orthodox Churches, and in the place of Christianity—for goodness' sake let us look around for something that will be both edifying and regenerating; for something that, unlike Spiritualism, will make us less selfish, less snobbish, less greedy, less arrogant, and less hopelessly self-satisfied; in short, let us look for something that will develop what few virtues we may happen to possess, and not tend—as Spiritualism most certainly does tend—to accentuate all our old vices and, what is undoubtedly more serious, to create new ones.

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